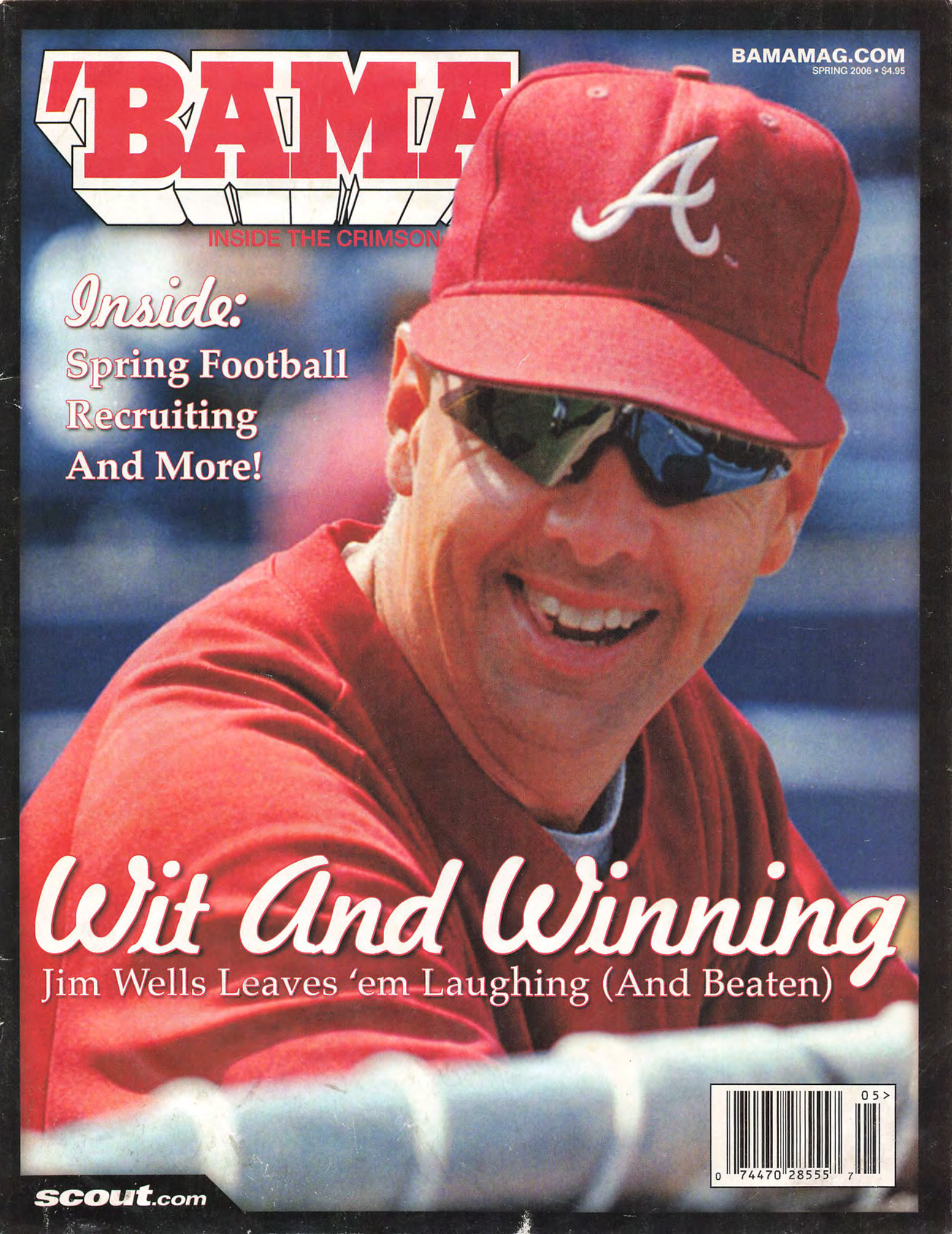
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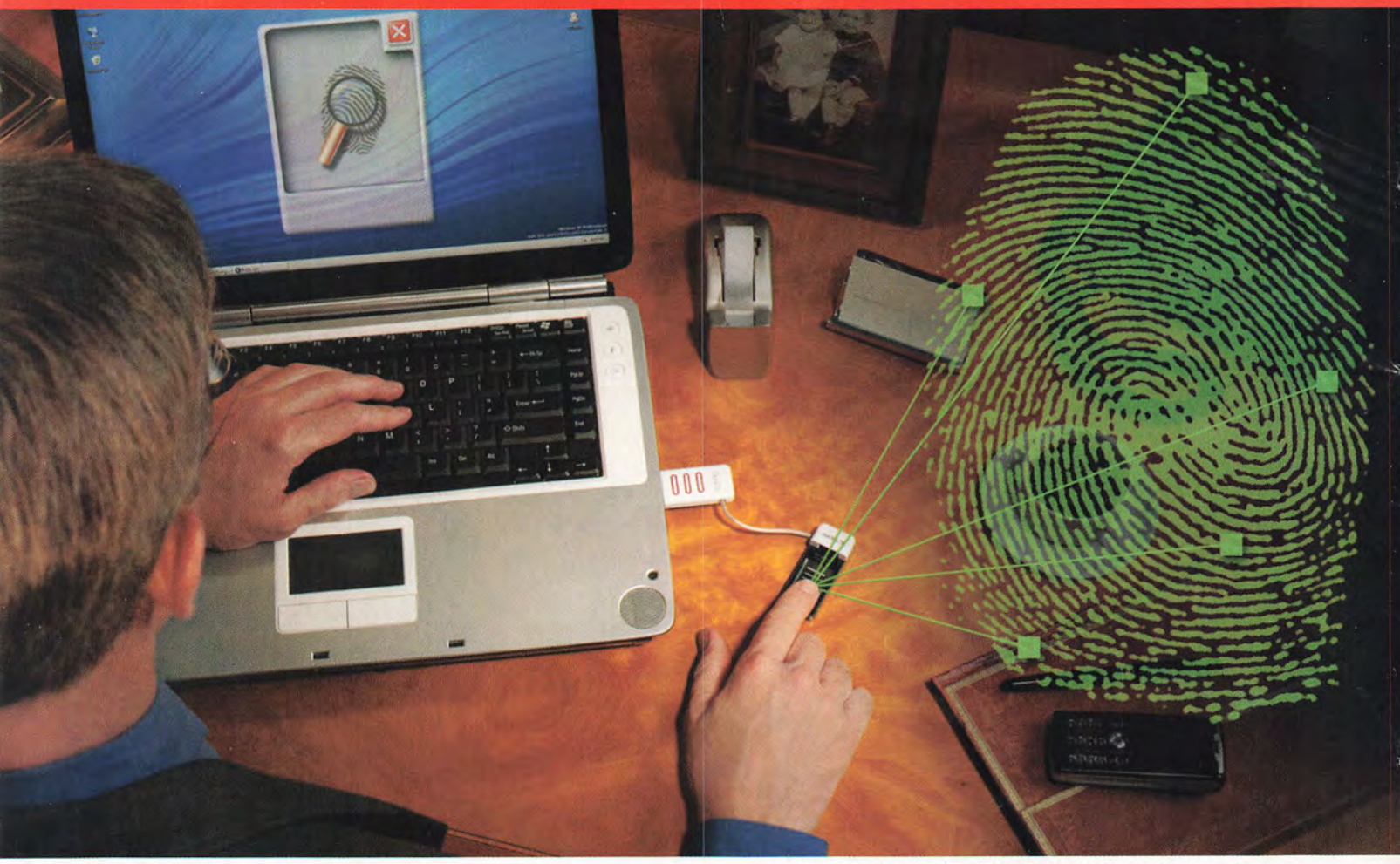

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Fellow Crimson Tide Fans,

A decade ago, Roy Rogers was the low post player on the Alabama basketball team. He fouled out in a road game, and the clever band leader for the opposing team had his tooters strike up, "Happy Trails." That was the end-of-the-show theme song of the movie cowboy Roy Rogers.

And every year with this issue we say, "So long, buckeroos," at least for a while. Most of our work is done here, at least that which consumes the interest of the majority of Alabama fans. Spring football practice and post-season men's basketball play are over.

That's not to say important things aren't still going on around The Capstone. If you are a baseball or softball coach or player, the best things are hopefully still to come, and won't be covered in 'BAMA Magazine, at least not until September or so. Ditto for the nationally-competitive gymnastics team, tennis players and golfers, and track and field men and women.

And, hello? Did we mention the recruiting work needed to be done by Mark Gottfried and his Crimson Tide men's basketball assistants in the spring signing period?

It's not that we won't be working. You can find everything you want to know about these sports, as well as continuing off-season stories of football and basketball and recruiting, at www.BamaMag.com. And we'll be putting together the summer issue, the 2006 'BAMA Football Yearbook, which will come to you this summer.

We have now completed our first "magazine season" in our new partnership with Scout.com and FOX Media. There were a few bumps in the road. For instance, Rupert and I had to come to an agreement as to who was in charge. (Umm, he is.) All-in-all we believe we are giving an improved product. Moreover, we think we got a little better with each issue. And we have plans to be better still in 2006-07. We've also noticed that when the football team is winning, people think we write better. We hope that continues…and we believe it will.

This is also a time when we worry about losing you. Literally. If you move, the Post Office will NOT forward your magazine to you, meaning you may miss the Yearbook and other future issues. So if you move, or if you need to renew or subscribe or send gift subscriptions for Father's Day, or anything else about your subscription, please use this toll free telephone number: 1-888-979-0979.

Finally, this is a time when we look for extra work. Sort of work, anyway. If your Red Elephant Club, Quarterback Club, or Touchdown Club is looking for a speaker on Alabama football, you can contact us at (205) 345-5074 for details. Alumni groups need to go through the National Alumni Association, (205) 348-1552.

And so, "'Til we meet again." ■

Sincerely,

Kirk McNair

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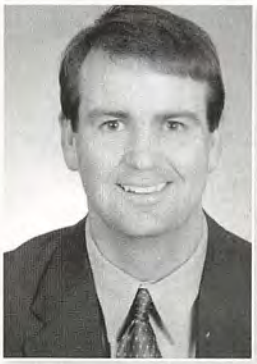

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Cover and centerspread photos of Alabama Baseball Coach Jim Wells by Kent Gidley

By Kirk McNair

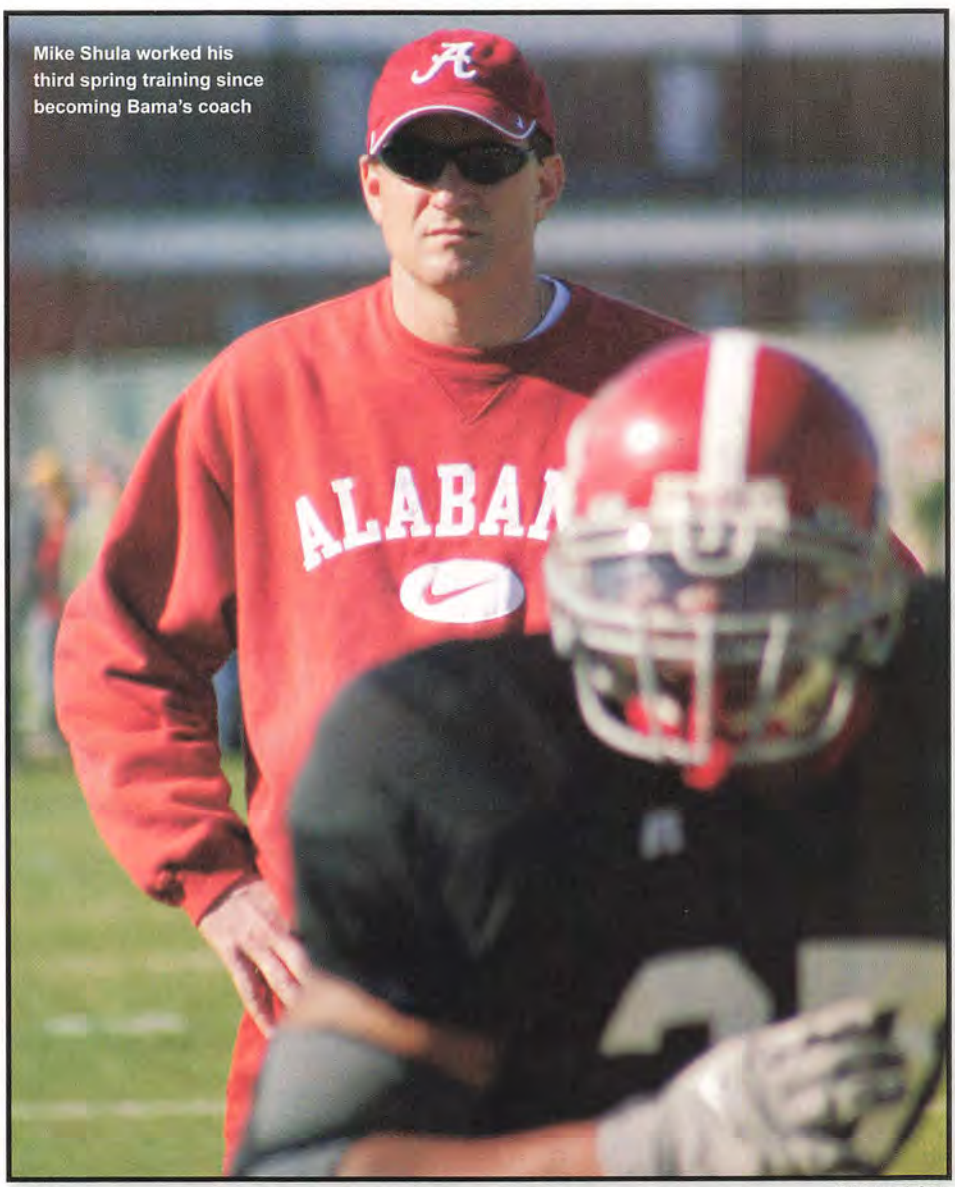
Spring Football

A look at how the Tide progressed in spring practice

Alabama Coach Mike Shula knows the importance of spring practice. It is a time to determine starters and helpful back-ups. It is a time to hone skills and to install schemes. Leaders emerge from the shadows of departed seniors. And, ideally, the team assumes an identity, which is one of the things Shula was looking for. It may not all come together in the spring, but those 15 days of practice (this year spread from late February until April 1) are an important link in the football chain.

Now the Crimson Tide is in the off season, which will continue until the squad reports back in August. That's in theory. In truth, virtually every returning player and many new ones will spend the summer in Tuscaloosa working out. That means strength and conditioning and it also means specialized football work, though without football coaches, on pass routes and defense and on line play.

Alabama lost seven defensive starters and only two offensive starters from the 2005 Crimson Tide football team that went 10-2. Yet in spring practice, the urgency seemed to be to determine starters on offense. That's probably because one of the offensive starters to be replaced is the quarterback, Brodie Croyle, an Alabama record-setter. And that equates to replacing starters at two or three positions. Additionally, Alabama's offense has not been as satisfactory as the defense in recent years. There's a feeling that a linebacker can just be plugged in for a lost DeMeco Ryans, but offensively there sometimes seems to be a lack confidence even in returning starters.



Mike Shula worked his third spring training since becoming Bama's coach

Photo: Benjamin Cohen

QUARTERBACK

In almost any year, discussion of a football team begins with quarterback. One good thing about discussion this spring is that all candidates are healthy. With Croyle gone, little-used sophomore John Parker Wilson is the favorite to have the job following spring practice. But Wilson was not great in the spring, primarily owing to a lack of consistency. Additionally, upcoming senior Marc Guillon had what Bama coaches called his best work since coming to Alabama, and Guillon at one time was the clear number two to Croyle. Still, it's hard to see anyone but Wilson being number one when Alabama resumes practice in August.

Guillon has a little more time in the Alabama system. While that's a plus, it is a minus that he probably has less upside than Wilson, or even number three quarterback Jimmy Barnes. Barnes got virtually no work on Alabama schemes as a redshirt freshman running the scout team last fall, and he had precious few opportunities in the spring, almost certainly relegating him to wearing a baseball cap and flashing signals to the playing quarterback this fall.

Wilson is a quarterback who can cause excitement. He's got an arm nearly the equivalent of Croyle (though not as quick a release). Wilson

has enough mobility to avoid most contact and the thickness to absorb what he can't avoid. And he has a quarterback mentality…maybe no more than Guillon or Barnes, but nevertheless he has that important quality.

Because Alabama will go into fall work with the quarterback battle still raging (see Page 11), don't look for Wilson or Guillon to be on any "watch lists," those lists of potential post-season award winners.

HALFBACK

But there is a place you can watch for an Alabama name. Any award for running the football has to be watching upcoming Tide senior Kenneth Darby. Darby wasn't expected to do much this spring. The word among the insiders was that Darby would be held out of contact work, giving Tide coaches a chance to look at his potential back-ups. And when Darby was out of some early work with what was described as "tendonitis" in his knee, there were knowing winks: the fix was in.

But a few days later, when the going got tough, Darby got going, rejoining his teammates to get in scrimmages, and responding like a man fighting for his job. Remember two Alabama teams ago when the Crimson Tide was getting ready for the Music City Bowl and Theo Townsend was listed number one at running back? Not to disparage Townsend, who has been a valuable contributor to special teams as a walk-on, but Alabama has improved quite a bit at halfback.

Darby is number one, no question. But who will be number two? Some might have suspected Glen Coffee, who was listed number two on the pre-spring depth chart. But Coffee, an upcoming sophomore, was held out with a pelvic injury. Jimmy Johns is certainly capable and he had mostly very good days, busting big runs up the middle in almost every practice.

But the surprise of the spring had to be redshirt freshman halfback Roy Upchurch. Upchurch missed all last fall after undergoing surgery on his ankle in August. And at best he was expected to have only a limited role in spring training. But Upchurch was in the backfield from the first day, and turned in very impressive performances. Shula said Upchurch "is a big back, a power-type runner with good speed. And his lateral movement has improved tremendously."

Last fall Jimmy Johns agreed to move to halfback and also volunteered for special teams in an attempt to get on the field. At the time there was speculation that the former Mr. Football from Mississippi would get a shot at his former position, quarterback, this spring. But after a good freshman year as a back-up tailback, Johns has elected to make his future as a running back. And he had an excellent spring, continuing the improvement he showed through the fall. He is an aggressive, physical back who showed signs of being a good blocker as well as runner. It is frequently blocking ability that gets a running back on the field.

There was also speculation that spring would be time for a position move for Ali Sharrief, who was as outstanding a defender as he was running back as a prep star. But the redshirt freshman is still on offense. It looks like there are too many halfbacks, particularly with top freshmen Mike Ford and Terry Grant reporting in August, but better too many than too few.

FULLBACK

Fullback seemed to be a known commodity going into spring practice. After all, two established seniors were back to share the load. Imagine then three nice surprises at fullback. It was no surprise that LéRon McClain picked up where he left off as just what the doctor ordered in a blocking fullback. The first surprise involved his running mate, Tim Castille. Castille looked like the fine runner of his pre-knee injury days. After the season-ending injury against Tennessee in 2004, Castille had only a mediocre year as runner and pass receiver last season. But in the spring he showed his former zip as a runner.

Surprises two and three were in the form of unexpected newcomers. One is Baron Huber, who came to Alabama as a defensive star, expected to be either a linebacker or defensive end. Instead, Huber was put at fullback on opening day and was very impressive as a blocker. Although he suffered a knee injury that took him out of some work, he will be fine in August. The other newcomer had been rumored for awhile but didn't show up in August. Patrick Hanrahan, the son of former Alabama player Gary Hanrahan, did show up in spring and made a scrimmage impression–particularly on rushing defenders. He knows how to pancake.

WIDE RECEIVER

There is a stiff upper lip among those in the athletics department regarding Tyrone Prothro. All the surgeries are always pronounced as "good," and it is understandable that there is no timetable for his return since June has been established as a likely time for Prothro to cast away his crutches and begin working out. But whether reasonable or not, it's difficult to expect Prothro, who has never been redshirted, to play his senior season in 2006.

Regardless if Prothro is back this year with his star quality at wide receiver, the position will be in good hands…just not many proven hands.

D.J. Hall and Keith Brown are proven starters. Though both have deficiencies and neither has been consistent thus far, both are also SEC quality and capable of game-breaking

plays. In the spring only one player–Matt Caddell–earned consistent second team status at wide receiver.

There are high hopes for newcomer Nikita Stover and for Aaron McDaniel, who moved to wide receiver from the secondary (see Page 15). And there is also the expectation that Will Oakley's run of bad injury luck will end someday and allow him to become a contender for playing time.

TIGHT END

Shula likes the idea of the tight end being a major part of the offense, and Alabama's tight ends have been. But thus far they have been blockers on almost every play. That's partly because Bama has needed "max protection" so often and partly because the tight ends have not been consistently good pass-catchers. But the quest continues for tight ends who are receiver threats.

The depth chart has gotten more impressive in the last couple of years at tight end. Last year Nick Walker, a redshirt freshman in 2005, started the regular season games, but without great success catching the ball. In the Cotton Bowl, 2005 true freshman Travis McCall got the call. And he held on to his first team jersey through spring practice. Another sophomore, Charles Hoke, had some nice practice days at tight end and it appears the Tide can count on at least three this season.

Cole Harvey, who came to Alabama as an offensive lineman and was also given a brief look at fullback, is also working at tight end.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Two years ago one of the regulars at tight end was Trent Davidson. Davidson missed last season, redshirted after foot surgery, and when he returned this year he was given a new number–a couple of them, in fact. First he was 54, then he was 74. But in any event he had moved over a yard, to right tackle behind returning starter Kyle Tatum (who will be the only senior on the offensive line in 2006) and in a battle with freshman Drew Davis.

Another Tider is expected to be in the offensive line, but he was very limited in the spring. Still, one of the most interesting developments if the move of Justin Britt, a parttime starter at defensive tackle as a sophomore in 2005, to the offensive line for 2006. If the move of Britt proves permanent, he will follow brothers Wesley and Taylor as Crimson Tide offensive linemen. Justin had shoulder surgery late last season, but should be full speed by August.

This was a different spring for Alabama in the offensive line with four returning starters. Bob Connelly, who coaches Alabama's offensive line, said, "I think there has been a vast improvement." He admitted that consistency is not where it needs to be, but said, "We're showing some flashes. The continuity is coming together. We had very few mental errors. Our goal was to carry over from the Cotton Bowl and continue to get better and I think we did that. We have a long way to go, but the focus was good."

Shula saw the offensive line gaining confidence during the spring. And confidence comes only with success.

Chris Capps is the returning starter at left tackle. Frankly, this was the weakest link in Alabama's offensive line play through most of last season and in spring scrimmages it appeared to continue as a problem area. It was disappointing that 2005 back-up Cody Davis (shoulder surgery) was unable to compete at the position, but Mike Johnson got good work.

B.J. Stabler took over at right guard early last season as a freshman, and he was solid in the spring. There's not much depth on the offensive line (one reason six offensive linemen were signed by Bama in February). Freshman Scott Deaton was the spring back-up.

Last year Antoine Caldwell was the starter at left guard until the Cotton Bowl. After JB Closner suffered a season-ending knee injury against Mississippi State, the Tide tried Taylor Britt at center. That was unsatisfactory, and so Caldwell moved to center for the Cotton Bowl. In the spring, Marlon Davis–a back-up right guard a year ago–seemed to make the transition to left guard well. He finished ahead of Justin Moon.

If Justin Britt does make the move to offensive line, Tide coaches expect him to be a guard.

Caldwell continued to do well at center in the spring, including learning to make the spread (shotgun) formation snap. It was apparent in the Cotton Bowl that the spread would not be a part of the Alabama offense, the obvious conclusion that Caldwell's move from guard to center did not allow time to perfect that skill. In the spring Caldwell was able to handle the blind snap to the quarterback in shotgun. Center could be a strong position for Bama this fall as redshirt freshman Evan Cardwell (despite missing some time with an ankle injury) was very good.

DEFENSIVE END

Mark Anderson was being projected as one of the highest round NFL draft choices out of Alabama, so to say that he will not be missed in 2006 was be incorrect. But Alabama does seem to have a nice combination of skill, experience, and depth at the defensive end spots, and any football coach would like to have those ingredients at every position.

There was also a bit of a spring surprise at end as junior Keith Saunders edged ahead of sophomore Bobby Greenwood, a top back-up last year, on the right side. The right end spot was also the site of one of the more interesting experiments of this or any other spring practice. Wide receivers and defensive backs are sometimes interchangeable, but it's not often that a player goes from split end–a skill position whose size requirements are not always critical–to defensive end, a muscle position. But that's what Zeke Knight did, and did fairly well. He was expected to be strong as a pass rusher owing to his quickness, and that was his strong suit. But he also was satisfactory in run defense drills. He's not likely to push Saunders and Greenwood for every down status, even with expected strength and weight gain, but Knight could be an exciting pass situation rush end.

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As expected, Wallace Gilberry was top man at left end, where he was a starter as a sophomore. Chris Harris was his primary back-up, but when Harris sat out a few practices with a slight injury, redshirt freshman Brandon Deaderick did well.

DEFENSIVE TACKLE

Rudy Griffin is gone, and Justin Britt may be. That leaves Jeremy Clark as the lone returning starter at defensive tackle. Still, this "Aces and spaces" position–three seniors and three freshmen–seemed to be in good hands in the spring.

Although the two tackle spots–nose tackle and left tackle–are different, the men manning those spots learn the assignments of both positions and are likely to be in either spot.

Jeremy Clark is the senior returning starter. Two of the biggest surprises of spring practice were the other two seniors, although perhaps neither should be considered a surprise. One, J.P. Adams, came to Alabama as a walk-on, but this son of an Alabama professor has been a good player as a back-up for several years. The other is Dominic Lee, considered the top line prospect in Alabama when he was signed by the Crimson Tide, but who had been plagued with injuries.

Tide coaches are excited about three freshmen tackles. Byron Walton was redshirted last fall and got good reviews for his scout team work. He should be a helper at nose tackle this season. The other freshmen were redshirted after some prep school work. Brandon Fanney and Lorenzo Washington both made progress, with Washington making some of the more spectacular defensive line plays in spring practice. Even though Washington and Fanney are listed third team, they look like a fine inside tandem for the future.

LINEBACKER

Prior to the start of spring practice, linebacker looked like a problem spot for Alabama, at least on paper. Practice field work certainly diminished those concerns.

DeMeco Ryans was a major loss for Bama, but his back-up last fall had a good spring. Terrence Jones is the only experienced player on the depth chart at strongside linebacker. Zach Schreiber started to make strides late in spring practice as a back-up. Eryk Anders, a prep defensive lineman and, like Schreiber a redshirt freshman, is also working at the position.

The only returning starting linebacker is Juwan Simpson, who plays on the weak side. He's backed by undersized junior Demarcus Waldrop, who performed well enough in the spring to earn a first team jersey (though still as a back-up). Waldrop could play at both strongside and weakside positions. Marcel Stamps has some experience as a weakside linebacker. It was unfortunate that soph Chris Keys, who was expected to move from safety to linebacker, was unable to participate in the spring. He was out with a broken ankle, suffered in an off-season scuffle.

Freddie Roach is gone from the middle linebacker spot. This was the area of one of the most spirited spring practice battles. Matt Collins, a junior and former walk-on, is particularly good against the run. Prince Hall, a redshirt freshman, showed great talent. This is a position that is likely to be contended at least up until the kickoff against Hawaii on September 2, but in any event it is part of the overall improved post-spring linebacker picture.

CORNERBACK

One starter graduated, the other unable to perform at full speed in the spring due to injuries. But even with Anthony Madison finished with his Bama career and Ramzee Robinson limited by back and wrist problems in the spring, cornerback play was encouraging. Although Simeon Castille was listed as a second team man (perhaps some carryover from him being academically ineligible for the Cotton Bowl game), he appeared in spring work to be the starting quality player he has been as a back-up the past two years. Although Castille worked much of the time at left cornerback with Robinson out of team drills, Castille and Eric Gray should be considered the contenders for starting right cornerback in the fall. Gray hasn't had much of a playing career because of injuries, but he looked very good in spring practice.

Chris Rogers turned some heads in pre-season practice last fall, but he was held out and will see playing time this year as a redshirt freshman. Lionel Mitchell missed the last half of the 2005 season with a head injury, but was back full speed in the spring. Travis Robinson, a sophomore cornerback candidate, was not able to practice in the spring.

SAFETY

Alabama's defense puts a lot of emphasis on plays by the safties, and the Tide lost a dandy pair in Roman Harper and Charlie Peprah. Throughout the spring Shula mentioned the need for the likes of strong safety Jeffrey Dukes to improve at the position. Dukes is clearly number one at strong safety, but walk-on (and special teams star) Rashad Johnson is one to watch. Travis Sikes also drew praise as a big play man. Cory Reamer was limited as he recovers from 2005 knee surgery, but he could factor in.

At safety, junior Marcus Carter did very well. After a couple of relatively non-productive years it may be a surprise to some that Carter played well, but probably the real surprise is that he was not more competitive earlier. Freshman

Jimmy Johns is the favorite to be the Tide's second-string back

Photo: Benjamin Cohen

Sam Burnthall also shows good instincts and skill at safety, though he couldn't quite get past senior walk-on Bryan Kilpatrick in the spring.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Not many Bama fans will soon forget the clunk-kick Cotton Bowl-winning field goal by Jamie Christensen. But Christensen seems to have forgotten it; at least the ugly part of it. In the spring he was magnificent, even called by Shula "the MVP on offense" after one practice in which he nailed a handful of long field goals. There was nothing in the spring to indicate any possibility of Christensen losing either his field goal-extra point or kickoff jobs. His top competition, redshirt freshman Andrew Friedman, will probably have to wait a season or two to show his stuff.

Christensen has a number of new supporting cast members. Luke Spaulding appeared to be the number one snapper in the spring, although freshman Brian Selman showed up late.

P.J. Fitzgerald was the holder on extra points and field goals, although that will not be the job for which he will earn the most scrutiny. Fitzgerald is also the top punter following spring work, with freshman Justin Martin the other spring candidate.

Much of the special teams work will be done when all hands are on board in August. It is common for newcomers to fill a number of coverage and protection positions. There could also be some kicking candidates in the arriving group.

In limited punt return drills in the spring, wide receivers D.J. Hall and Matt Caddell and cornerback Simeon Castille got most of the work. ■

Post-Spring Depth Chart

OFFENSE

Split End	**81 Keith Brown (5-10, 190, Senior)**
	11 Matt Caddell (6-0, 181, Junior)
	25 Aaron McDaniel (6-1, 176, Sophomore)
Flanker	**22 D.J. Hall (6-3, 190, Junior)**
	9 Nikita Stover (6-1, 190, Sophomore)
	7 *Will Oakley (6-1, 188, Sophomore)
	4 *Tyrone Prothro (5-8, 178, Senior)
Left Tackle	**72 Chris Capps (6-6, 296, Junior)**
	78 Mike Johnson (6-6, 285, Freshman)
	75 *Cody Davis (6-7, 279, Sophomore)
Left Guard	76 Marlon Davis (6-4, 315, Sophomore)
	73 Justin Moon (6-5, 290, Junior)
	50 *Justin Britt (6-4, 294, Sophomore)
Center	**59 Antoine Caldwell (6-3, 296, Sophomore)**
	70 Evan Cardwell (6-3, 290, Freshman)
Right Guard	**61 B.J. Stabler (6-4, 295, Sophomore)**
	71 Scott Deaton (6-5, 295, Freshman)
Right Tackle	**58 Kyle Tatum (6-8, 290, Senior)**
	79 Drew Davis (6-6, 290, Freshman)
	74 Trent Davidson (6-5, 270, Sophomore)
Tight End	**83 *Travis McCall (6-2, 250, Sophomore)**
	88 Nick Walker (6-5, 245, Sophomore)
	89 Charles Hoke (6-6, 240, Sophomore)
	87 Cole Harvey (6-3, 250, Freshman)
Quarterback	14 John Parker Wilson (6-2, 215, Soph)
	18 Marc Guillon (6-3, 212, Senior)
	15 Jimmy Barnes (6-5, 229, Freshman)
Halfback	**34 Kenneth Darby (5-11, 220, Senior)**
	10 Jimmy Johns (6-3, 240, Sophomore)
	27 Roy Upchurch (6-0, 193, Freshman)
	29 Ali Sharrief (5-9, 208, Freshman)
	38 *Glen Coffee (6-1, 207, Sophomore)
Fullback	**33 LéRon McClain (6-1, 256, Senior)**
	19 Tim Castille (5-11, 236, Senior)
	40 Baron Huber (6-4, 240, Freshman
	35 Patrick Hanrahan (6-0, 245, Freshman)
	91 Will Denniston (6-3, 221, Junior)
Placekicker	**86 Jamie Christensen (6-0, 178, Junior)**
	15 Andrew Friedman (6-2, 215, Freshman)
Snapper	66 Luke Spaulding (6-0, 213, Junior)
	69 Brian Selman (6-0, 195, Freshman)

DEFENSE

Left End	**92 Wallace Gilberry (6-3, 254, Junior)**
	91 Chris Harris (6-5, 244, Senior)
	95 Brandon Deaderick (6-4, 230, Freshman)
Left Tackle	**99 Jeremy Clark (6-3, 305, Senior)**
	97 Lorenzo Washington (6-4, 265, Freshman)
Nose Tackle	96 Dominic Lee (6-2, 303, Senior)
	67 J.P. Adams (6-3, 288, Senior)
	98 Brandon Fanney (6-5, 270, Freshman)
	77 Byron Walton (6-4, 298, Freshman)
Right End	94 Keith Saunders (6-3, 246, Junior)
	93 Bobby Greenwood (6-6, 260, Sophomore)
	84 Zeke Knight (6-3, 217, Junior)
Weakside Linebacker	**42 Juwan Simpson (6-3, 222, Senior)**
	44 Demarcus Waldrop (5-11, 190, Junior)
	6 Marcel Stamps (6-3, 215, Junior)
	32 *Chris Keys (6-2, 205, Sophomore)
Middle Linebacker	56 Matt Collins (6-1, 241, Junior)
	21 Prince Hall (6-0, 240, Freshman)
	53 Ken Vandervoort (6-3, 216, Junior)
Strongside Linebacker	55 Terrence Jones (6-2, 223, Senior)
	46 Zach Schreiber (6-2, 240, Freshman)
	51 Eryk Anders (6-2, 220, Freshman)
Left Cornerback	**1 *Ramzee Robinson (5-10, 190, Senior)**
	17 Chris Rogers (6-1, 178, Freshman)
	24 *Travis Robinson (5-10, 180,Sophomore)
Right Cornerback	2 Simeon Castille (6-1, 188, Junior)
	36 Eric Gray (5-11, 188, Junior)
	16 Lionel Mitchell (6-2, 180, Sophomore)
Strong Safety	3 Jeffrey Dukes (6-2, 205, Senior)
	49 Rashad Johnson (5-11, 178, Sophomore)
	48 Travis Sikes (6-4, 195, Freshman)
	13 *Cory Reamer (6-3, 198, Sophomore)
Safety	20 Marcus Carter (6-1, 200, Junior)
	30 Bryan Kilpatrick (6-4, 197, Senior)
	43 Sam Burnthall (6-3, 195, Freshman)
Punter	11 P.J. Fitzgerald (6-0, 190, Freshman)
	23 Justin Martin (5-10, 205, Freshman)

Returning starters in bold (Antoine Caldwell starter at left guard in 2005)
*Injured and limited or unable to participate in spring
Does not include ineligible transfers and many walk-ons

By Dan Sellers

Quarterback Battle

Wilson has lead over improving Guillon

The Alabama football team lost seven starters off of a defense that ranked near the top of the nation in most every statistical category, so it should come as no surprise that one of the main goals for Coach Mike Shula and staff was to find those defensive replacements in the spring.

While those replacements are starting to boil to the top, as Defensive Coordinator Joe Kines so colorfully explained, the Tide had its troubles in trying to replace the most important loss on offense.

Sophomore John Parker Wilson and senior Marc Guillon battled throughout the spring for the starting quarterback position left void by the graduation of Brodie Croyle, who became Alabama's all-time leading passer during the 2005 season.

Wilson is the odds-on favorite to win the position battle. The Hoover native was the top back-up to Croyle during the 2005 season. He played in five games and was 7-of-11 for 98 yards. Wilson tossed two touchdown passes and did not throw an interception.

"I'm not sure how to qualify [the battle]," Offensive Coordinator Dave Rader said. "John Parker has been our number one, but Marc has been playing better than he ever has for us. John Parker has been a little bit more consistent, but they both have me fired up right now."

The battle heated up after each quarterback struggled tremendously in Alabama's first scrimmage of the spring. Wilson was just 9-of-22 for 96 yards, while Guillon was just as ineffective with a 4-of-14 day. Wilson did commit two turnovers, while Guillon did not throw a pick.

A third scholarshipped quarterback candidate is Jimmy Barnes, a redshirt freshman. Barnes is far behind Wilson and Guillon in knowledge of the offense. While Wilson and Guillon were involved in Bama's plan last year, and Guillon in 2004 as well, Barnes spent his freshman year as quarterback of the scout team, meaning he didn't get any work on Alabama's offense. And in the spring with the Tide having to make sure it got enough work for Wilson and Guillon, Barnes was left behind.

Wilson plans to hold the reins in the fall.

Photo: Mitch Dobbs

Shula put an emphasis on keeping the offense's turnover number as good as last year's.

"One reason we were so good last year was that we did not turn the ball over," Shula said. "We didn't have many of those dangerous throws where you were cringing when Brodie let it go, when you said, 'We were lucky that didn't get intercepted.' We didn't have those. This spring, we've seen them try to force some throws in there when they haven't been open."

Shula, a former Alabama quarterback and prior to becoming Bama's head coach a quarterback coach in the NFL, takes an active part in quarterback preparation. He watches the mechanics and has input with the quarterbacks on the considerable mental aspects of the position.

Shula, said. "For every quarterback, in my opinion, when you are throwing the football there are three things, and if you can do these three things then you can play well," Shula said. He said those three things are "going to the right guy, being on time, and throwing the ball accurately."

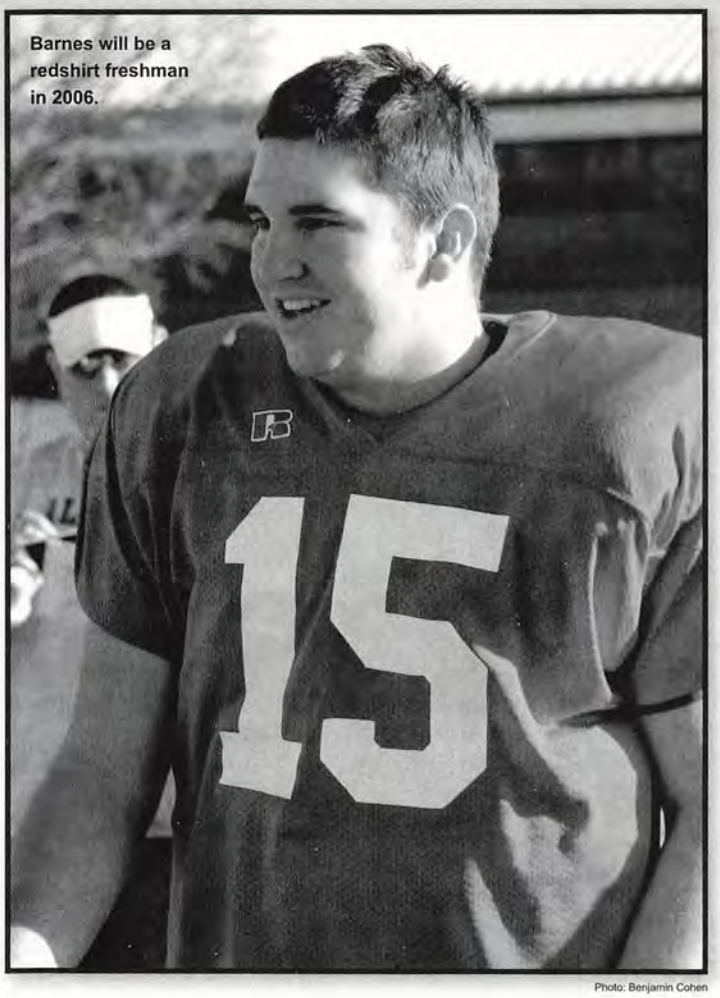
Rader called the first scrimmage the quarterbacks' worst practice of the spring, but he said the players would learn from the bad outing.

"Hopefully they took that practice as an embarrassment," Rader said. "That was just a bad practice, but they've got some character and I think they will rebound from it."

Wilson came back from his bad outing in good fashion by going 17-of-23 in the Tide's next scrimmage. He had 154 passing yards and connected with D.J. Hall on a 23-yard scoring strike for the first team's only touchdown of the practice.

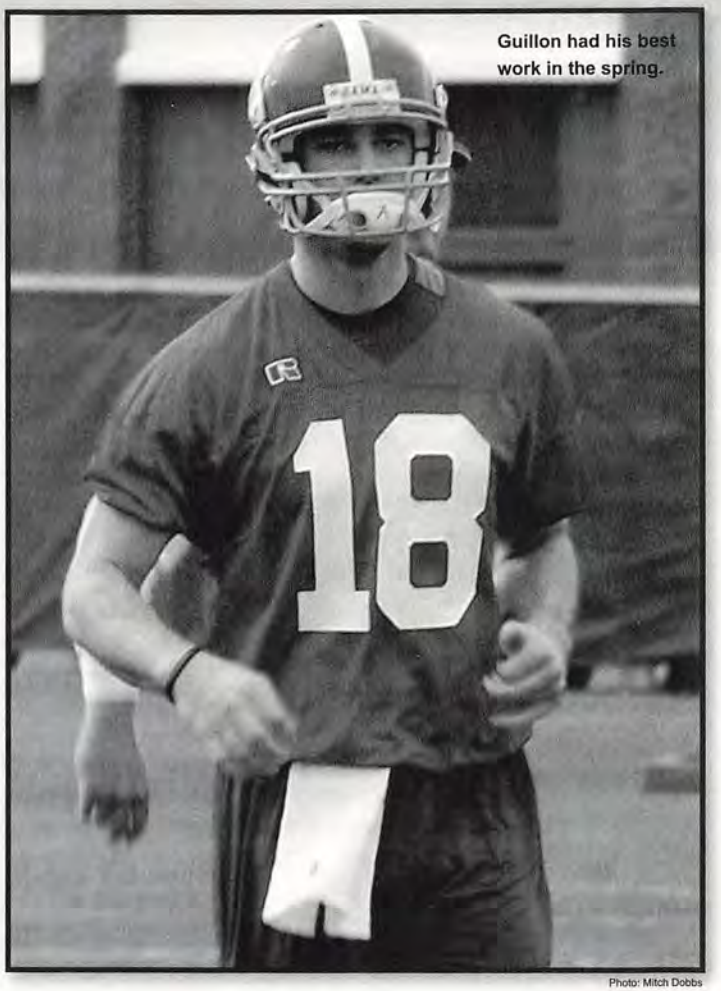
Much of the spring was spent with the first team offense going against the first team defense. Wilson and Guillon both got work with the first offense in those situations.

Following the second scrimmage, Wilson said, "I thought I took better care of the ball than



Barnes will be a redshirt freshman in 2006.

Photo: Benjamin Cohen



Guillon had his best work in the spring.

Photo: Mitch Dobbs

I did last [scrimmage]. I felt like I hit a lot more throws. We drove the ball a little bit better, but we got down in the red zone and didn't score a couple times. That's one of the things we've got to work on is putting it in the paint."

Wilson credited his film study in making corrections from the bad outing.

"I went in and studied a whole lot better than I did earlier," he said. "I tried to pick up on some little things here and there, which I think helped out. I paid more attention to what the safeties were doing, and I had gotten away from that."

Following the bad showing with an improved scrimmage was a big confidence boost for Wilson. He said that he felt better with the direction he is heading.

"It helps my confidence a whole lot," Wilson said. "I feel a lot better coming off the field than I did last week, and I'm anxious to go watch the tape to see what we did right and learn from what we did wrong. I see myself getting better, and especially better from [my last performance]."

On the other side of the battle, Guillon did not exactly follow up with a stellar performance, but he also made some progress. He was 9-of-22 for 61 yards, and he did throw one interception. That pick earned him chat time with Shula.

"I did a lot of things better than I did [last time out]," Guillon said. "It's always encouraging to have a good day out here. That's what we're looking for everyday - a step in the right direction.

"I made a lot better reads. There's still a lot more things I want to do better, but you always want to be a perfectionist and we know that nobody is going to be perfect, but all you can do is strive for perfection."

Guillon has been no stranger to quarterback competition throughout his career. He played at the same high school (Mirmonte High in Chico, California) as Ken Dorsey, who led the University of Miami to the 2001 national championship.

Guillon followed Dorsey to Miami, but when Miami signed an elite quarterback prospect in Kyle Wright, it created a log jam at the position. With the chance of playing time looking slim in Coral Gables, Guillon elected to head to Tuscaloosa.

And with his senior year rolling around, Guillon has found himself amidst another quarterback battle. He knows that all he can do is perform at his best when he gets the opportunity.

"I've just got to come out here and play hard, do the right things, make the right decisions, and get the ball where it needs to be," he said. "That's all you can do as a quarterback."

Guillon was slowed by back problems last season and saw playing time in only two contests. He only attempted one pass.

In 2004 Guillon found his way to the starting position after Croyle suffered a torn knee ligament. He earned starts against Arkansas and South Carolina, before being sidelined by a combination of back problems and ineffectiveness.

He completed 20-of-43 passes (46.5 per cent) for 191 yards with a touchdown and three interceptions.

Wilson is the frontrunner for the position, but Shula hinted that it could still be up in the air in August.

"We're not in a hurry [to settle the battle] right now," Shula said. He said the coaches were able to "collect information" on the quarterbacks in the spring–information provided by the way they performed–and that the decision will be based on that.

Look for the battle to resume when Alabama reports for August practice. ■

By Thomas Murphy

Making Strides

Marcus Carter committed to being good enough

From the shadows of low snap count land comes a University of Alabama player looking to jump into a big set of cleats.

In the form of a Jeopardy answer: This Crimson Tide player did not begin to take football seriously until the 10th grade.

Who is Marcus Carter?

Interesting question.

Carter's mother, Patricia Davis, helped keep him straight on his academics as a child and wishes she could help do more in that arena now. She has been an ardent supporter of her kid.

``I've never met anybody who didn't like him,'' Davis said. ``And I'm not just saying that because he's my child. You can ask anybody.''

The average rabid Alabama football fan will start learning more and more about the 6-1, 190-pounder over the next four months, as in his junior season Carter continues his bid to become a starter at safety, where Roman Harper and Charlie Peprah roamed the past few seasons gobbling up major playing time.

``It's a big responsibility,'' Carter said, ``especially after losing two of the best players in the SEC. ``Those are big shoes to fill. I was behind Roman and watching him play every day. He was a big influence, practicing with him every day.''

You might say it's a blessing and a curse, inheriting a position where the Crimson Tide has been stout and smart for the better part of three years.

On the one hand, equalling the production of the previous safeties, like Carter and rising senior Jeffrey Dukes will try to do, looms as a most difficult challenge. On the other hand, Carter and Dukes have been learning from two of the best.

``Just being here around Roman and Pep, that was the biggest thing about the last couple of years,'' Carter said. ``It helps a lot. Now, you can't beat game reps and all like that, but it helped being behind those two.''

Carter is an interesting study.

He devoted himself to basketball and was also a great baseball player at Fort Payne before he jumped back onto the gridiron as a sophomore after a two-year hiatus.

``He fell in love with it,'' Charles Carter said of his son. ``That's all he wanted to play after his sophomore year.''

Carter's logic behind dropping football for a couple of years after he played as a seventh grader?

``After that first year he played in junior high, he said, 'Mother, I'm not going to go out there and kill myself and get beat up if the other part of the team is not doing what it's supposed to,'' said his mother, Patricia Davis.

When Dale Pruett arrived in Fort Payne as head football coach, Carter got back on the gridiron.

Marcus Carter was also a major Auburn fan as a pre-teen.

When he was around eight or nine, Charles took him to an Auburn game, where they gained access to the locker room and little Marcus scored a bunch of autographs.

``He was an Auburn fan,'' Charles Carter said.

Marcus was blessed with natural athletic talent. In fact, he had good enough talent that he rushed for 710 yards and seven touchdowns on 105 carries as a part-time running back as a junior. He was also playing safety on defense and putting up good numbers, but it was his extreme athleticism as a runner that sent the major college recruiters flocking to Fort Payne High School.

Auburn came hard after Carter early, and after explaining how many defensive backs they intended to sign in that class of 2004, the 16-year-old committed to the Tommy Tuberville regime.

Charles Carter tried to get his son to exercise a little patience after the early summer commitment to the Tigers. ``I tried to tell him, `Marcus, as good an athlete as you are, if they want you now, they're going to want you later on,'' Charles said.

It wasn't long, however, before Carter started showing up at Alabama football games on unofficial visits, most often with prep teammate Aaron McDaniel. The recruiting sites swiftly began predicting that Carter would eventually wind up in the Crimson Tide camp, where McDaniel had committed.

Despite an injury-plagued senior season, Carter's stock as a blue chip recruit remained high. He was selected to the Scout.com South Hot 100 and was ranked as the number 10 prospect in the state by SuperPrep magazine.

In January of 2005, after attending most of the Alabama home games that previous season, Carter did what the recruiting world had anticipated by changing his commitment to Alabama.

``After he visited different schools, the decision changed just like that,'' Charles said. ``He fell in love with Alabama.''

Carter, who was ranked among the top 10 recruits in the state by most analysts and number 81 on the Mobile Register's Super Southeast 120 list, linked up with an overwhelmingly Alabama-based class, featuring players like Simeon Castille, Antoine Caldwell, B.J. Stabler, Justin Britt, Travis Robinson, and John Parker Wilson.

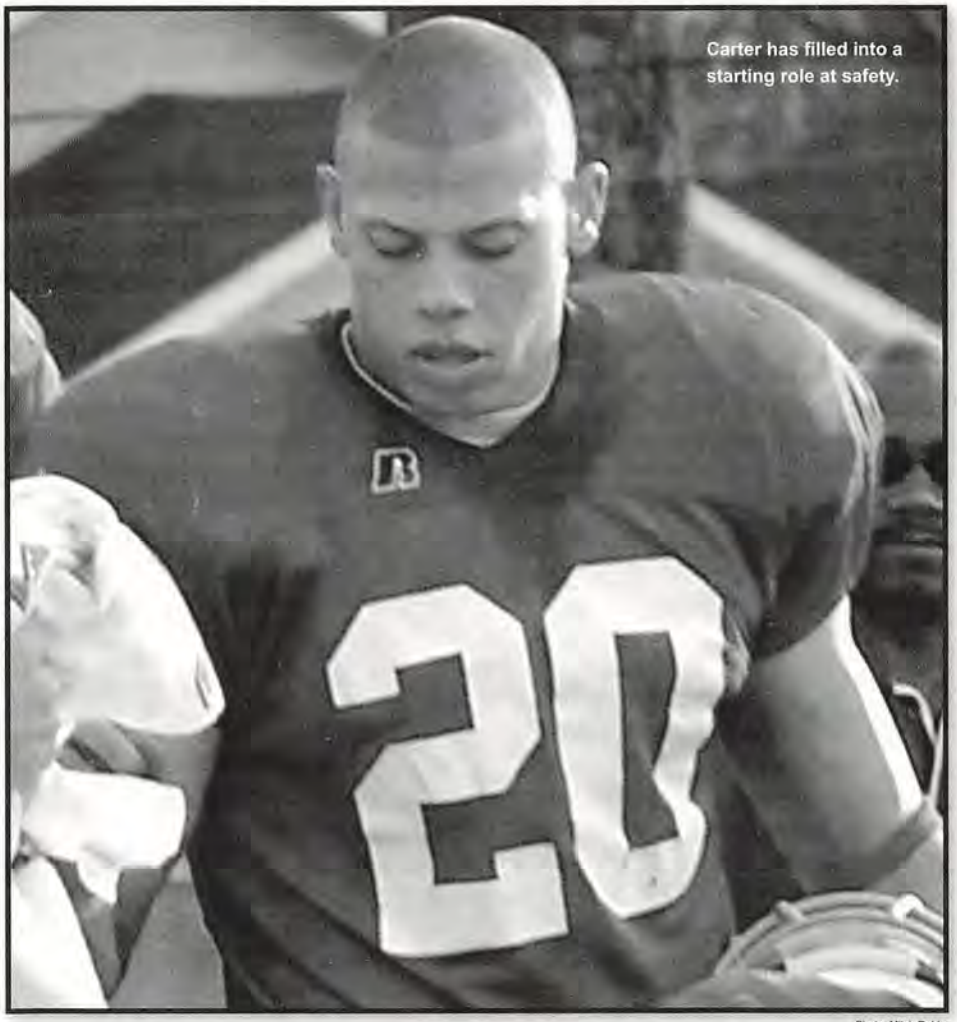
Carter's athleticism would be needed as a true freshman, mostly in the area of special teams, and he answered the call. Carter played in all 12 games and contributed three tackles.

``He had to play as a freshman a little bit because of our depth,'' Tide Assistant Coach Chris Ball said. Ball coaches the Bama secondary and is now molding Carter into a starting safety.

Shortly after spring practice concluded in the spring of 2005, Carter went home to Fort Payne and engaged in some beer drinking with friends. The police were tipped off to the party and Carter made headlines for his arrest for underage possession of alcohol.

His mother said, ``I told Marcus that he served as an example for other kids. I said, `If you're going to do something like this, don't do it in Fort Payne. This is not Tuscaloosa. You can't just get out and do things like that and get by with it. If you get caught doing it, you're going to get slandered.'''

The incident, which was overblown in the



Carter has filled into a starting role at safety.

Photo: Mitch Dobbs

eyes of Charles Carter, sent a valuable lesson to young Marcus.

``It was more of a learning experience, knowing I represent The University of Alabama,'' he said. ``And not only The University, but the players who have been there before me. I don't need to do stuff like that.''

Carter was suspended for Alabama's first game of the season, a 26-7 win over Middle Tennessee State that could have netted playing time for the true sophomore.

Charles Carter tried to emphasize to his son how the relatively minor incident could have blown up into something much more serious.

``I said, `What if you had really done something and gotten in trouble?'" he asked of Marcus. ``Like what if you had been drinking and driving? He learned a big lesson over that. If he didn't he's in a whole world of trouble.

``There's been a major difference in him since then. Like I tell him, you're taking a chance if you go out there and do stuff. Just because you put that jersey on, there's more attention on you.''

That attention increased with the advent of spring ball at Alabama. Where jersey numbers 41 and 26 were such mainstays for so long, now Carter's number 20 and the number 3 of Dukes do most of the patrolling.

Alabama coaches and players detected a renewed commitment from Carter.

``Marcus Carter is making real strides,'' Tide Coach Mike Shula said after the team's first major scrimmage of the spring. ``We've talked about (Carter and Dukes) being able to run the show back there. The last few days of practice, they've shown to be improving in that area.''

Carter has begun to sound like more of a veteran player with his increased role.

``We just keep fine turning everything, going over all the calls,'' Carter said after that scrimmage. ``We've got to cut down on the deep balls because we had two of them completed on us (in that scrimmage).

``I'm just studying. You've got to keep working all the time.''

Ball would give a big amen to that.

``Marcus is having a good spring, getting better all the time,'' Ball said. ``He's had good practices, from the second half of last season until now. He's making good strides.''

Alabama Defensive Coordinator Joe Kines added his take on Carter's progress. ``He's had a good spring,'' Kines said. ``He knows what to do now.

``He can get up on the blackboard and draw it all out now. It's just a matter now of making sure he stays in tune with down and distance and what's going on down on the field. He's got a shot to get better.''

Carter has begun earning the respect of his teammates as a guy who is unafraid of contact, which is clearly a must for a strong safety.

``Take Marcus Carter, for instance, he loves to come down and hit,'' junior defensive end Wallace Gilberry said. ``He's very physical. That's something we had in Roman Harper and I think he's going to fill that role real good.

``I think Carter and Dukes are going to be real good. They're going to hold us down in that secondary.''

Carter and Dukes have accepted the magnitude of their new positions in the defensive hierarchy.

``We've been working together for two and a half years, and we have good chemistry back there,'' Carter said. ``We hang together about every night.''

Carter knows he has to deliver more than just a comprehension of the Tide's defensive packages.

``I have to make more plays, make more big plays,'' Carter said. ``Then it's about being a leader back there, making checks and everything.

``I think we can be just as good (as the nationally number two-rated defense Alabama has sported the last two seasons). Coach Kines comes out here every day stressing how hard we have to work. We have to get a chemistry going with the whole defense and get our own identity.''

Charles Carter is excited about the opportunity presenting itself to his son.

``He played behind two great guys, and now he's got the chance to do something great,'' he said. ``Me and some of the guys I work with were talking about it the other day: does he realize the opportunity he's got?

``I preach to him and I preach to him until I'm blue in the face. He loves to work out in the gym. Now he has to realize he has to go out on the field and work just as hard.

``Following Roman and Charlie Peprah, who were five-year players, is going to be hard. Marcus has been in the program two years and this is his third. He's really going to have to step up his game to be as good as those boys were. The more he plays, the better he's going to get.'' ■

By Mitch Dobbs

Think Fast

New wide receivers have much to learn

Third and seven. You're in at X-receiver. The whistle blew to start the play clock a few seconds ago. You huddle. "Eye right stack. Ripper Liz 763." Whew! A basic play. You went the wrong way out of the huddle, have to switch sides. On or off the line of scrimmage? That could cost you a penalty. It's man-to-man defense and the corner is pressing. You have to run a go-route. Wait! They switch back off into zone. The play clock is at two seconds. There goes the Z in motion. Snap.

There's little time to think on a football field. Players have to hear the play, read the defense, react and adjust without hesitation. The thinking must be instantaneous.

For receivers Nikita Stover and Aaron McDaniel, both newcomers to the wide receiver position at Alabama, there was too much thinking going on this spring. While all this is second nature by now to top receivers D.J. Hall, Keith Brown and Matt Caddell, Bama's other receivers are a little bit lost.

It's fair to ask: "Where have all the receivers gone for Alabama?"

Only two years ago Alabama had signed one of the deepest classes of receivers in memory, hauling in six players listed as wide outs to join Tyrone Prothro and Caddell, who were part of the prior class.

Three of those eight players occupied the top receiving spots for Alabama this past spring. Beyond that Coach Mike Shula was relegated thinking more about using tight ends and backs in place of a typical "four-wides" offensive set in passing situations.

He watched McDaniel and Stover languish in green third-team jerseys along with Mississippi State transfer Jonathan Lowe, who won't be eligible till 2007, and walk-ons Darwin Salaam and Reyn Wills.

"We are a little bit thin there lately," Shula said. "That will be a spot we've got to recruit. We can use three wides and a tight end or three wides and two backs. The tight ends have gotten a lot of work and they keep getting better because of it."

Technically, McDaniel and Stover aren't competing directly. Stover is a Z-receiver (flanker) and McDaniel is an X-receiver (split end). But with Caddell having the understanding and ability to play both spots, anyone making a move at either position has a chance to move up in the rotation.

Causes of the attrition at the receiver position came in all varieties. Tyrone Prothro, after suffering a broken left leg on October 1 in the fourth quarter against Florida, is hoping to return, but whether he can make a comeback will be a mystery through the summer and likely up until Alabama begins fall training in August.

Will Oakley has had perpetual hamstring problems since joining up as a part of that 2004 class. He had healed toward the end of last year, by all accounts showing out in Sunday scrimmages for players not normally in game action. He was poised for a breakout spring but the left hamstring sprung again and kept him out virtually the entire spring.

Marcel Stamps moved over to defense halfway through his freshman year, and Zeke Knight, after an incredible spring last year, forgot how to catch and asked to move to defense, where he played at end this spring.

Stover was the gem of the 2004 class, by most accounts the best player in the state of Alabama. Because of academic circumstances he went the junior college route, playing his freshman year at Itawamba (Mississippi) and sitting out last year so that he could enter Alabama this spring as a sophomore. He was Mike Shula's best hope to add a deep-strike threat for the coming season, but Stover, too, was slowed by injury in the spring. A groin pull forced him out for a week.

Stover, 6-2 and 205 pounds, struggled physically, saying he felt "about 70 to 75 percent" even after he returned to practices, and he struggled to keep pace in learning routes and the Shula playbook.

"He's like a freshman even though he has had a year of junior college," Shula said. "Hopefully he will continue to get better, learn the stuff and be in better shape. I will say this, having him here now helps."

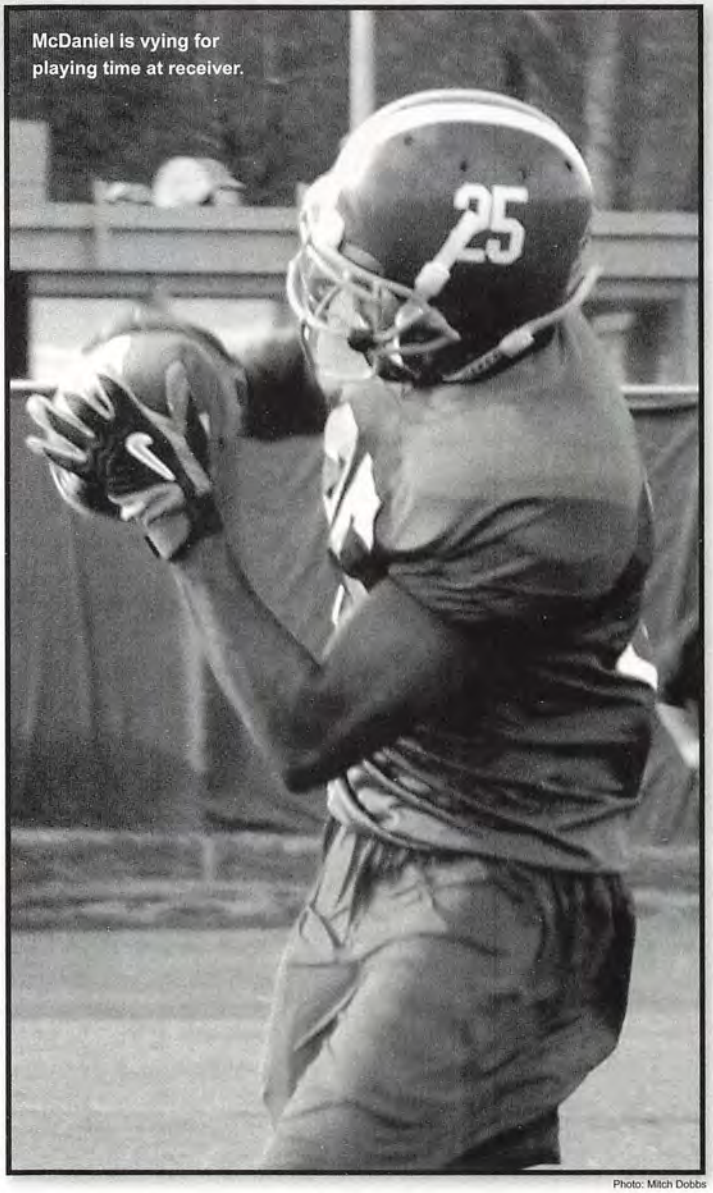
Shula went back to another member of the 2004 class for help, converting McDaniel from a defensive back to receiver during December Cotton Bowl practice and through the spring.

"Aaron McDaniel is better now than he was the first day but he still got a long way to go," Shula said. "Aaron's got a chance. He's got to keep working hard and keep showing up in practice."

McDaniel, too, is still in the early climb of a steep uphill learning curve. The redshirt sophomore averaged one or two mental errors per practice in the spring.

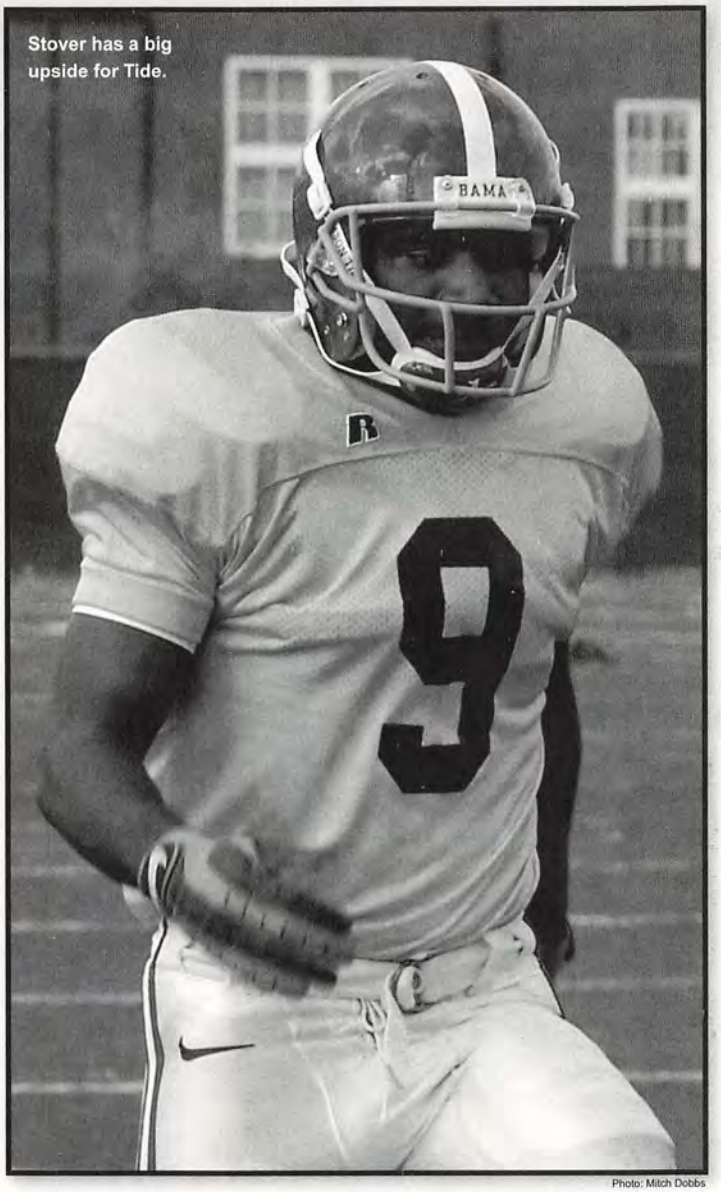
"You've got to know the formation, which side to line up on, your route, who you're blocking on a run play," McDaniel said. "It gets confusing some times. I had played corner for two years here, and I was getting kind of comfortable playing corner. I thought I'd get playing time this year, but they said the needed receivers. Whatever can get me on the field fastest."

McDaniel has progressed, though. After Chis Ball and Shula talked to him about moving to offense, he used the month of December, when Alabama was preparing for the Cotton Bowl, to break in the new position.



McDaniel is vying for playing time at receiver.

Photo: Mitch Dobbs



Stover has a big upside for Tide.

Photo: Mitch Dobbs

"I didn't know anything," McDaniel said. "There are so many different plays, it kind of took a while to get used to it. I'm starting to learn the offense a whole lot more."

It will take more time for the plays to become second nature for McDaniel. The athleticism, however, is there for both men trying to break into the receiving rotation in the spring. McDaniel, from Fort Payne, and Stover, from Hartselle, have known and competed with one another for much longer than their short time trying to compete at receiver, and they split the competitions they had in high school.

"We played in high school my sophomore year," McDaniel said. "They were 8-0 and we were 3-5. We beat them on the last play of the game. We did high jump and he beat me in state for high jump and I came in second place."

The two will see new competition in August. While a Prothro return would be a boon, Oakley or some newcomers could also wind up as the fourth receiver.

Alabama will have one true receiver, Mike McCoy of Rankin, Mississippi, coming new in fall, but other freshmen could find their way to split end or flanker. And Shula said that it's "a strong possibility" that a true freshman could earn playing time at receiver.

In addition to McCoy, Phenix City quarterback Earl Alexander, with his 6-4, 208-pound frame, will have the luxury of deciding whether he'd like to dip his toes in the water by spending the year redshirting as a third-string or lower quarterback, or jump into the deep end at wide receiver, where he has full potential to break into a regular rotation right away.

Another crossover candidate is Javier Arenas, a 5-9, 175-pound signee from Tampa, Florida. Arenas has drawn favorable comparisons to Prothro with some mystifying moves on display in kick returns and as a receiver. He returned seven kicks (four punts, three kickoffs) for touchdowns as a prep senior and scored touchdowns rushing, receiving, on punt returns, kickoff returns and on a fumble recovery. For now, however, he's listed as a cornerback.

It was wide open either McDaniel and Stover in the spring, but the fall will be a different story at a much quicker pace. Whether it's McDaniel, Stover, Oakley, Prothro, Arenas, McCoy, Alexander or someone else, the recipient of the playing time will have to think fast. ■

Braves™ on FSN SOUTH™

Bringing Home the Braves

By Mitch Dobbs

STUDENT-Athletes

NCAA has controversial plan to monitor academics

On March 1, the National Collegiate Athletic Association for the first time meted out penalties for schools who didn't make the number set for academic progress, a controversial Academic Progress Rating (APR) intended to measure progress towards degree equally with retention of athletes on scholarship.

Currently, the score to beat is 925, but like so many things with the NCAA, it is subject to change with little notice. Each player on athletic scholarship represents two points that can be earned for his squad in a semester–one point per semester by maintaining eligibility and another for not quitting school.

If a squad is below the 925 cut score, there is one scholarship reduction for each "0-for-2" athlete per sport with a 10 per cent cap. (For example, football could lose no more than nine scholarships per year of the 85 which teams are allowed, while basketball teams could lose two scholarships per year.)

Alabama's score was 916 in football, 902 in men's basketball and 919 in baseball. All of those were marked with an asterisk, however, because the NCAA made "squad-size adjustments" because there is not enough history of data used to calculate a meaningful score.

Defections from the basketball squad were the major contributor to the dropped score, even though Coach Mark Gottfried has seen to it that every player who has ever stayed for his full eligibility has graduated. The basketball team had a perfect 1000 APR score last year.

"Over the course of time students decide to leave for different reasons," Jon Dever, the athletics department's director of Student Services, said. "All of those students are reflected in the report. With [a small squad such as] basketball, it doesn't take a whole lot of those type of instances to lower that number."

Current data measures the 2003-04 and

Jon Dever

Photo: University of Alabama

2004-05 school years. The NCAA is working towards four-year cycles, when they plan to drop the squad-size adjustments.

Though Alabama–and every other major college sports program in the country–was spared penalties this year, the process of determining the scores drew fire from UA Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management Roger Thompson, who oversees the calculation of Alabama's Academic Progress rating.

"The NCAA has said, 'here are some guidelines,'" Thompson said. "The NCAA needs to ensure that it is calculated in a similar fashion across the board."

Alabama's rating is calculated independent of its athletics department, and that's not how it's done at every school, Thompson said.

It might seem the numbers speak for themselves, but after exceptions were put in place to allow for a player who leaves the school in good standing to go pro or transfers to another school, subjectivity entered the process. For example, there's no uniform way in determining if a player who is said to have transferred actually enrolled in another school. Right now, schools are on their honor to report the numbers accurately.

Thompson said he called the NCAA four of five times for direction on how to calculate a score in a particular instance, "I'm not sure everyone is doing that," he said.

Asked if it should be mandatory for APR reporting to be removed from athletics, Thompson said, "It's up to powers other than me, but I think it would be effective. I'm not saying anyone is being unethical, but it seems a little self-serving."

Alabama reported a score of 880 last year and a 916 two-year average for football. That marks a dramatic improvement, something Alabama officials have attributed to the expired eligibility of 2003 seniors who did not maintain their eligibilty–in theory because the team was not eligible for a bowl, which serves as an incentive for many players to keep up in the classroom so they are able to travel for the bowl game.

Auburn football reported a 981 multi-year APR score after having a 960 in last year's official public release. Unless Auburn reported more players on scholarship for the most recent year, that means Auburn either reported a score of 1002 out of the possible 1000 points for the 2004-05 academic year or that Auburn retroactively adjusted scores for the 2003-2004 year. The lack of transparency in the process makes it impossible to tell which (or some other) gimmick was used.

Proposals have been made to formalize the APR reporting process within the Southeastern Conference to try to keep the league on an even playing field. The matter will likely be taken up at the spring meetings in Destin, Florida.

"Overall, it's a solid report," Alabama Director of Student Services Jon Dever said. "I think we're moving in the right direction."

UA TWO-YEAR APR SCORES

WOMEN'S SPORTS	
*Basketball	911
Cross Country	984
Golf	953
Gymnastics	990
Soccer	985
Softball	986
Swimming	983
Tennis	971
Indoor Track	988
Outdoor Track	988
Volleyball	1000
MEN'S SPORTS	
*Baseball	919
*Basketball	902
*Cross Country	922
*Football	916
Golf	963
Swimming	977
Tennis	949
Indoor Track	931
Outdoor Track	923

*Not subject to penalty due to squad size adjustment.

APR is just the first step in going after athletic programs for academics. What the NCAA terms as its "historical penalty structure" will be the next big focus of the NCAA committee on academic performance. Some are seeking crippling penalties for programs that do not comply, up to and including, a possible death penalty for academic inadequacy.

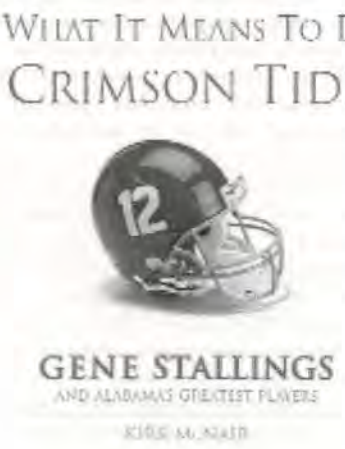
The harsher historical penalties are still under wraps. The penalty structure will be based on three measurements of a team's performance: 1) against all teams in all Division-I sports, 2) against all teams within a given sport and 3) against students on that team's particular campus.

This new score will be called the Graduation Success Rate (GSR). Statistical tools for gauging this last, and most controversial, performance measure have not been unveiled. Julie Cromer, an NCAA director of membership services and the staff liaison to the Committee on Academic Performance, said, "What we do know is that the penalty structure will be designed to impact the habitual underachievers, if you will, within the Division-I membership." ■

What It Means To Be Crimson Tide

Gene Stallings and Alabama's Greatest Players

Alabama football means championships and All-Americans and, for many, memories of a man in a houndstooth hat. Some 60 former Alabama players who performed in Crimson and White over a 75-year period tell us What it means to be Crimson Tide, and many remember Paul "Bear" Bryant. His time as a Bama player, assistant coach, and 25 years as head coach is a major part of Alabama football, but not the only great era. There have also been national championships won under Wallace Wade and Frank Thomas and Gene Stallings. And part of What it means to be Crimson Tide is former Alabama players' expectations of more national titles.



The last coach to lead Alabama to the national championship is Gene Stallings, who played and coached for Coach Bryant before becoming a Hall of Fame caliber coach himself.

Not only have the coaches been legendary but that stellar tradition has spawned players enshrined in the College Football Hall of Fame and the NFL's Pro Football Hall of Fame. Now, Gene Stallings and 'Bama Editor Kirk McNair have collaborated to bring together many of the greatest players ever to wear the Crimson and White to share their memories in What it Means to be Crimson Tide-Gene Stallings and Alabama's greatest players.

Among those sharing their memories are: from the '40s and '50s, Harry Gilmer and Bart Starr; from the '60s and '70s, Lee Roy Jordan, Joe Namath, Ray Perkins, Ken Stabler, Johnny Musso, John Hannah, and Ozzie Newsome; from the '80s and '90s, Mike Shula and Jay Barker. And many more, including those from the new millennium.

Gene Stallings reveals much of his philosophy and also tells the story of how he did *not* become Alabama's head football coach in 1983. Kirk McNair introduces the players.

What it Means to be Crimson Tide-Gene Stallings and Alabama's greatest players is now available. The hardcover book is more than 300 pages in an oversized format with archival photographs throughout. To order your copy ($27.95 plus tax, shipping and handling) call 1-205-345-5074. You may request a personalized autograph from Kirk McNair.

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BUCKLE UP

By Kirk McNair

Way To Go

Alabama men's basketball team overcomes odds

Who would have dreamed on January 7 that "Alabama" would be part of NCAA Basketball Tournament bracket games three months later? As everyone who follows college basketball, much less Bama basketball, knows, on January 7 the Crimson Tide suffered a seemingly death blow when the Crimson Tide's leading player–a John Wooden National Player of the Year candidate–was lost for the season with a knee injury.

When Chuck Davis returned from the lockerroom on crutches the night of Alabama's first Southeastern Conference game, it was not unreasonable to expect the Crimson Tide season to go about the way the game that night did–a loss to a mediocre Mississippi team.

Instead, Alabama bowed its back, at least all but one did. Coach Mark Gottfried and his staff and the remaining players–only seven scholarshipped players remained after Justin Jonus quit, and that magnificent seven would play basically every minute of the rest of the schedule–did more than could have been imagined, much less expected.

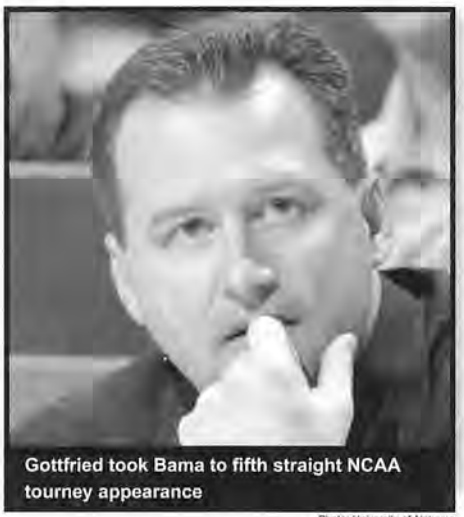
The reward came on March 12, Selection Sunday, when the Crimson Tide was named to the NCAA Tournament for a fifth consecutive year.

Count has been lost the number of times this year that Gottfried has included words to the effect of, "I can't tell you how proud I am of this team." In fact, win or lose, he usually opened his post-game press briefings with that sentiment.

And why not?

Even those national pundits questioning the inclusion of Bama in the national tournament with the worst record (17-12) took note of the grit of a team that could overcome so much. And Bama had wins over six other NCAA Tournament teams–the same number of losses the Crimson Tide absorbed by playing one of the nation's most difficult schedules.

There have been Alabama teams that over-achieved and Tide teams that under-achieved. The 2005-06 squad looked like the former in December, but was unquestionably the latter by the time this year ended.



Gottfried took Bama to fifth straight NCAA tourney appearance

Photo: University of Alabama

Alabama not only made it to the NCAA Tournament, for a day or two the Tide's Jean Felix, an off-the-bench senior, was the talk of college basketball. In the NCAA Tournament opener, ten seed Alabama upset seven seed Marquette as Felix hit a school record-tying eight three-point shots and scored 31 points.

And for those experts who said, "Well, yeah, but Alabama won't be able to beat UCLA, the Pac-10 champions and number two seed playing in San Diego," you were correct. But no one would suggest Bama gave the tradition-rich, seventh-ranked Bruins anything less than Crimson Tide best. Alabama was within inches–the distance Ron Steele's three-point try was short in the final seconds–of moving on to the Sweet 16.

There was certainly no shame in Bama's season ending at the hands of UCLA.

After the UCLA game, Gottfried said, "We were disappointed, but I couldn't be more proud of this basketball team than I am right now. I am extremely proud of these guys–proud of our team…We were 7-6, lost our best player, and (tonight) we were a jump shot away from making it to the Sweet 16."

The memories of those tournament games will be fresh longest, but there were other great moments in the 2005-06 season. The final record of 18-13 is only so-so by ordinary Alabama standards, but this was no ordinary year.

More than one has suggested that it would not have been a surprise to see Alabama fold the tent after losing Davis. After all, Alabama hadn't been particularly special with Davis in December games. However, that wasn't because of Davis. It was primarily because the Tide was limping along with a less-than-healthy Ron Steele. Steele had back spasms in the pre-Southeastern Conference games. When he got healthy, Bama got going.

On paper, Alabama went into the final 15 games of the SEC schedule with a 0-1 record and favored in perhaps no more than a couple of games–home contests against Mississippi State and hapless Auburn. Indeed, a game at Auburn followed on the heels of the Ole Miss loss, and expectations were that the Tigers would pile it on an Alabama team that had been dominating the cross-state team. It didn't happen. Alabama won a big road game. And then the Tide shocked the SEC by going to Lexington and defeating Kentucky.

When the dust on the regular season had cleared, Alabama had defeated every SEC Western Division team (including SEC champion LSU) at least once and had bested the top four teams in the SEC Eastern Division–Tennessee, Florida, and Vanderbilt, as well as Kentucky.

The Crimson Tide finished SEC play with a 10-6 record and earned the second seed in the West for the SEC Tournament.

Certainly there were disappointments. From time-to-time Bama seemed to run out of gas. It happened as Alabama lost big leads late in games against Arkansas in Fayetteville and against Kentucky in the SEC Tournament.

But those setbacks and others were more than off-set by the thrilling successes.

Anyone who saw Alabama's miracle comeback against Vanderbilt is unlikely to forget it. Trailing by two points with seconds remaining and 94 feet from the basket, Jean Felix made a perfect length-of-court pass to freshman Richard Hendrix, who then made a perfect pass

to freshman teammate Alonzo Gee, cutting to the basket for a game-tying dunk. Bama won the game in overtime. Alabama also defeated Arkansas in overtime.

In the win at Kentucky, Jermareo Davidson had the game of his career, 28 points and 8 rebounds.

Alonzo Gee may not have known much about the Alabama-Auburn rivalry before getting to Bama, but he played like it was the most important series in college basketball. At Auburn he had 17 points and 10 rebounds, and in the return match in Tuscaloosa Gee had a season-high 21 points.

This was supposed to be the year that Tennessee ended Alabama's winning streak over the Vols. Final score: Bama 92, Tennessee 79.

This was supposed to be the year that Florida extended its winning against the Tide. Final score: Alabama 82, Gators 79.

The team–Steele, Davidson, Hendrix, freshman Brandon Hollinger, and senior Evan Brock as starters and Felix and Gee off the bench–got just about all possible out of the potential.

It was a typical Gottfried team in that Chuck Davis has already earned his degree and the other two completing their eligibility–Brock and Felix–will be graduated this spring.

While all players contributed, all were not all-stars, of course.

Davis had been the pre-season pick for all honors before his injury.

But Bama wasn't left out.

Four Tiders were among those SEC coaches selected as among the league's best.

Sophomore point guard Ronald Steele and junior center Jermareo Davidson both were voted Coaches All-SEC first team. Steele was a unanimous selection by the coaches. The Birmingham native, led the league in free throw percentage (.914)and minutes played (40.3) and finished eighth in the league in scoring (15.9 ppg), tied for fourth in assists (4.44), tied for 10th in steals (1.56) and tied for ninth in assist/turnover ratio (1.39). Davidson, who is from Atlanta, finished tied for eighth in scoring (15.6), fourth in rebounding (8.5), ninth in field goal percentage (.453), ninth in free throw percentage (.753), fifth in blocks (1.69), sixth in offensive rebounds (2.69), fourth in defensive rebounds (5.81) and seventh in minutes played (36.00).

Steel was an iron man for the Tide.

Photo: Getty

Two Crimson Tide freshmen were voted to the eight-man SEC All-Freshman Team by the coaches. Athens native and forward Richard Hendrix was a unanimous selection and was joined on the honor team by Alonzo Gee, a forward from Palm Beach, Florida. Hendrix averaged 10.7 points and 9.3 rebounds against the league, starting in all 16 SEC games. Gee came off the bench and averaged 9.0 points and 3.0 rebounds in SEC play. Hendrix finished second in the league in rebounding and seventh in blocks (1.50). He had five double-doubles in points and rebounds in SEC play. Gee also had a double-double in league play.

The inclusion of Hendrix and Gee on the All-Freshman team marked the sixth consecutive year Gottfried's teams have produced at least one Freshman All-SEC team member. The streak began in 2001 with Gerald Wallace who now plays in the NBA for the Charlotte Bobcats, and includes Mo Williams who is now playing for the Milwaukee Bucks (2002), Kennedy Winston (2003), Jermareo Davidson (2004) and Ronald Steele (2005). Williams was the 2002 SEC Freshman of the Year.

The All-SEC first team consists of Davidson, Steele, Ronnie Brewer of Arkansas, Joakim Noah of Florida, Glen Davis and Darrel Mitchell of LSU, Chris Lofton of Tennessee and Shan Foster of Vanderbilt.

The Freshman All-SEC team includes Gee, Hendrix, Auburn's Quantez Robertson and Rasheem Barrett, Mike Mercer of Georgia, LSU's Tasmin Mitchell and Tyrus Thomas and Mississippi State's Jamont Gordon.

LSU's John Brady was voted SEC Coach of the Year by his peers after coaching the Tigers to the league's regular season title. LSU's Glen Davis is SEC Player of the Year and LSU's Tyrus is SEC Freshman of the Year. Florida's Lee Humphrey is the SEC Scholar Athlete of the Year.

The United States Basketball Writers Association voted both Steele and Davidson to its 2006 USBA All-District IV team. That district encompasses players from the states of Kentucky, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia and Alabama.

Joining the Alabama duo on the USBWA All-District team was its Player of the Year, Chris Lofton of Tennessee, Rodney Carney of Memphis, Florida's Joakim Noah and Taurean Green, Tennessee's C.J. Watson, Rajon Rondo of Kentucky, Taquan Dean of Louisville, Shan Foster of Vanderbilt, and Guillermo Diaz of Miami. Tennessee's Bruce Pearl was voted Coach of the Year in the district.

The Associated Press also had Steele on its first team, but the AP needs to take a look at its voters. Someone left Steele off his ballot. LSU's Glen Davis was named player of the year and teammate Tyrus Thomas was honored as the top newcomer.

The Tigers claimed both awards for the second year in a row.

Tennessee's Bruce Pearl, who guided the Volunteers to their first NCAA appearance since 2001, was honored as coach of the year, preventing an LSU sweep of the individual awards.

Davis was the only unanimous choice for the first team. Other selections were Arkansas' Ronnie Brewer, Florida's Joakim Noah and Tennessee's Chris Lofton. Brewer is a junior, the other four are sophomores.

No one quibbles with Pearl or Brady being named SEC Coach of the Year. Florida's Billy Donovan was also a viable candidate.

But it is likely that no one did more considering the odds than Gottfried.

Years from now it may look as though this was not an outstanding Alabama basketball team. But those who watched will know that it was far, far greater than its record. ■

Winning And Wit

Jim Wells doesn't lose much, including sense of humor

Many believe that coaching is all about wins and losses, but those who have had the pleasure of working around 12th-year Alabama Baseball Coach Jim Wells can attest that for Wells winning and wit go hand in hand.

David Crane, the radio voice of Alabama baseball, was the sports information contact for baseball in 1995, Wells' first year at The Capstone.

"I went up to his office and introduced myself and talked to him a while," Crane said. "He was different than any coach I'd ever met. A couple of interviews in his office and you could tell immediately that he was absolutely hysterical. You have to appreciate dry humor, and I do, so he's one of my favorites."

"He is not a self promoter," Crane said. "He really is unlike any other coach I've gotten to work with. He probably has the smallest ego of any coach I've ever seen, particularly considering he has won as much as he has."

Those who have heard Wells recognize his gift of humor. He has timing that would be the envy of a professional stand-up comedian.

That dry humor, though, is difficult to convey in print. Wells' deadpans usually come out like a cross between actor Leslie Nielson ("Naked Gun" and "Police Squad!"), and Eor, the pessimistic, gloomy, old donkey who happened to be a friend of Winnie the Pooh.

In College Station, Texas for the 2003 NCAA regional hosted by Texas A&M, Wells was asked what he thought about the town. Big mistake. Wells compared the area to a time he'd been there a decade earlier.

"Good," he responded. "They have restaurants now. It was like a demilitarized zone last time I was here."

Once as Wells signed an outstanding prospect, the player's mother chimed in

By Mitch Dobbs

with a list of her son's accomplishments. Wells noted, "Oh, I didn't know we got a statistician with the deal."

The Alabama baseball program has seen a lot of transformation in the 12 years since Jim Wells was named the school's head baseball coach. Alabama began to win, but Wells never changed.

"The thing I remember the most is the year before he came, they won four SEC games and I vividly remember twice in that year having batters called out for hitting out of order," Crane said. "Three years later they are as mad, and as angry, and as disappointed as you'll ever see after losing to LSU for the national championship."

Asked once for his opinions of the other teams in the Southeastern Conference, Wells came to LSU and quipped that the Tigers would probably be good again "with their 61-man roster." Drew Champlain, a reporter for the Dothan Eagle who worked for the Crimson White from 2001-2004, remembered the line when Southeastern Louisiana came to town for a series. Champlain recalled, "I asked him, 'Do they have a 61 man roster like LSU does?' and he said, 'No I can't think of 61 people who'd want to live in Hammond (Louisiana, the location of the Southeastern Louisiana campus).'"

"He's more sarcastic, more witty," Champlain said. "He can usually come up with a smart answer to a lot of questions and get a rise out of the media."

He inherited a team that set school futility records for overall losses and SEC losses the year prior to arrival. Wells tuned a down-trodden program in a national contender almost overnight. In just two years he had the Crimson Tide playing in the College World Series. The next year was when Alabama made it to the national championship game.

Crane said, "He's the same if you're around him when they're winning 50 games and are the number one seed at Omaha as he is after they just missed out on SEC tournament. He'll never change; always intense. Granted, I get to see a different side than his players do–a lot different."

Wells isn't the popular perception of what is called "a player's coach." He's hard on them, and doesn't mince words when asked about a player, "but once they do figure him out, it's a whole lot fun for them," Crane said.

Tom Roberts, another member of Alabama's Crimson Tide Sports Network, was already in stitches from one of Wells' routines when he asked, "Jim, do your players 'get you?' Do they know how funny you are?"

Wells didn't hesitate. "No, Tom, it's a lonely world I live in."

It's a world where the National Spelling Bee captivates him throughout its duration on ESPN, and where "Saturday Night Live" skits with Will Ferrell–especially the "More cowbell!" bit about the band Blue Oyster Cult–is prime entertainment.

On March 3, Wells became the school's all-time winningest coach with a 4-3 win over Appalachian State at Sewell-Thomas Stadium. He notched his 488th win at the school to surpass Dr. Barry Shollenberger's previous mark.

A number of former players came out for the game to see their old coach break the school record, including G.W. Keller, Antonio Bostic, BJ Green, Scott McClanahan, Scott Evans, Adam Pavkovich Gabe Scott, Bo Hannah, Morrow Thomley and Matt Grooms.

He also received congratulatory phone calls from Andy Phillips, Dax Norris, Chris Moller, Jason Cox and Dan Chavers.

"It means a lot," Wells said after the game. "It was nice to see Coach (Hootie) Ingram and a lot of former players here tonight. Coach (Mal) Moore and the administration have been very supportive of me and my family. I appreciate this very much. I've never been a part of anything like this before. This was a lot fun and I really appreciate all that went into making this night possible."

One of Moore's first priorities when he became athletics director was to get Wells a new contract.

Dax Norris was on his way to Atlanta Braves spring training facilities and couldn't make the milestone win in person. The starting catcher at Alabama in 1995-96, Norris was a major force on the '96 team that went to the College World Series final game.

"We had guys who bought into his system and wanted to win," Norris said. "All 30 guys believed in the same things. I have learned a lot of things from him, things I still use today. I felt like we had a good team, especially in 1996. He made us feel that way whether we were or not."

One of the trademarks of Alabama teams under Wells is the ability to keep the games close and then win the game with a late-inning rally. The Crimson Tide has posted over 240 come-from-behind wins in Wells' tenure. In addition, Alabama has won 75 games in its last at-bat, including 35 walk-off wins.

"Coach Wells never quits," Norris said. "He taught us we are always in every game no matter who we play. He always said play until the final out. We won a lot of games in the late innings or the last inning and his teams are still doing that today. That is a credit to him and the way he coaches the game. He would never let us give up."

The Crimson Tide averaged 43.5 wins per season in Wells first 11 years. His teams have won one SEC Championship (1996), six SEC Tourney titles (1995, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2002 and 2003) and played in nine NCAA Regionals.

"Coach Wells is very intense," Phillips said. "His knowledge is second to none. The intangibles that he brings to the game are amazing. There is no question that I am still playing today because of him. He saw more in me than I ever saw in myself. Without Coach Wells, I don't think I'd be in pro ball today.

"When you look at all the guys he has coached, whether playing baseball or running a business, we have a lot of successful people. He has developed quality guys. I still feel a part of the program today and follow the team every day. I talk to Coach Wells a lot. We got it going in the right direction and I was glad to be a part of that."

Wells was a winner before coming to Alabama. He was a successful high school baseball coach and before that, a basketball coach, at Loyola Prep. He then moved to LSU as a graduate assistant coach under Skip Bertman for three years.

"I remember when we were at LSU, Coach Bertman was still new to the SEC, and he was just as concerned with selling hot dogs and making sure the hot chocolate was hot as he was winning the games," Wells recalled. "I learned a lot from him, more than just baseball."

After three years and one College World Series berth at LSU, Wells was named the head coach at Northwestern State, a team that had suffered through 13 consecutive losing seasons. Wells won his first 20 games at NSU. A late season losing streak kept them from winning the Southland Conference title and earning a berth in the NCAAs.

Bertman recommended Wells to Alabama Athletics Director Cecil "Hootie" Ingram after the 1994 season and Ingram picked Wells up in The University jet for a visit to Tuscaloosa.

"It was a whirlwind," Wells said. "I remember Hootie Ingram taking us out on the field and it was quite impressive from what we had come from–to have a fence was quite impressive."

"I told him we could sell some outfield signs," Wells said. "He said, 'We don't need that money.' I still remember that, thinking who are these people. I had spent my life selling outfield signs."

Selling signs, winning games, and making us all smile. ■

Jim Wells The Friend

EDITOR'S NOTE: Barry Allen, the author of this piece, is the sports information director for Alabama baseball.

I've been around the Alabama baseball program a long time, some 22 years. I have seen many great teams and some not-so-great teams, too. I have written about thrilling wins and excruciating losses.

I've been fortunate to work with a lot of great coaches and players and have developed many wonderful relationships through the years. I've been fortunate to meet a lot of the older players who laid the foundation for what Alabama is today–players and coaches like Joe Sewell, Hootie Ingram, Fred Frickie, Mike Innes, Frank Lary, Al Worthington, Butch Hobson, Hayden Riley, David Magadan, Joe Vitiello and Barry Shollenberger.

I never had the pleasure of meeting Coach Happy Campbell, who was Alabama's all-time winningest baseball coach until 1990. I worked with Shollenberger for 10 years. He was always nice and kind to me and willing to help a young kid trying to break into the business of sports information.

I could talk to him anytime, day or night. He always had a great story and, as his PhD suggests, he is a very bright man.

I covered the Tide's 3-0 win over Murray State on April 14, 1990 that made Sholly the school's all-time winningest baseball coach. I said goodbye when he retired as baseball coach in 1994 and again when he left The University in 1999.

I also remember the first time I met Jim Wells. He was in Coach Hootie Ingram's office. His wife Lisa, who was seven months pregnant with their second child Melissa, was waiting in the lobby. I did not know a lot about Jim Wells, but I respected the job he had done at Northwestern State in Natchitoches, Louisiana (the hometown of the movie "Steel Magnolias").

NSU was terrible when he arrived (13 straight losing seasons) in 1990 and in five years the Demons had won three Southland Conference titles and played in two NCAA Regionals. Heck, they had even beaten mighty LSU the year they won the national title in 1991 and 1993.

Alabama baseball needed help. And thanks to Hootie Ingram and (former Alabama Sports Information Director) Steve Townsend's knowledge of the game and their contacts, Wells was the man for the job.

None of us knew he would be this good. You could not have.

I remember his first game. I was nervous for him. I wanted him to win. I am an Alabama fan, first, but no coach deserves to lose his debut. I remember shaking his hand in the dugout wishing him luck. Then telling assistant coaches Todd Butler and Mitch Gaspard, "We're all pulling for you. Good luck!"

Chris Eilers and Tim Young pitched brilliantly and Brett Taft (the only player in school history and probably NCAA history to hit home runs in his first two collegiate at-bats and his last two collegiate at-bats) legged out a a two-out infield hit in the bottom of the 11th inning to score Anthony DuBose for the 2-1 win. The Wells era had begun. What a finish!

We take him for granted these days. Alabama is expected to win and go to Omaha every year. It's not that easy.

It wasn't then either. That's why the 1996-99 period of UA baseball is one of the greatest of all time. Three 50-win seasons and two number one rankings in Omaha (no team before or since has been the top seed in consecutive years). And it came under Jim Wells' leadership.

Jim Wells is more than coach. He is a friend. I never had the priveledge of meeting his father (he died early in Jim's life), but I have met his mom. I talk to her often; she calls the press box every night checking on Jimmy (as she calls him) and the Crimson Tide. She celebrates the wins and takes the losses hard. It's easy to see how he became the person he is. They say you are a reflection of your parents (I agree).

He is a passionate and caring husband and father. Lisa, Lauren, Melissa and Drew (third time is the charm for a baseball player) are at all the games. He loves the St. Louis Cardinals and Dallas Cowboys. He talks baseball. He idolizes Mickey Mantle, Stan Musial–the real legends in our sport.

Jim Wells is also a friend. Just ask any of us who know him. He has been especially amazing to me the last four years when my life has been turned upside down with cancer to my Dad, a bone marrow transplant for my wife, Carla, and all of our little Annie's problems that she keeps overcoming everyday.

I remember calling him in Louisiana the day after his jersey was retired at NSU (Bama beat NSU and was playing Centenary the next day) to tell of the news of Annie's birth and that she might not make it. I cried as we talked. He was comforting. He told me that baseball was no longer important. My family needed me and to be strong and that God would take care of Annie. Once again, Coach Wells was right.

One thing he missed on though. Baseball is still important. Without baseball there would be no Jim Wells. There would be no school record 488th win. There would be no friend. Now that would be a tragedy!

Congratulations Coach Wells on your milestone. And thanks for the memories and your friendship! ■

By John Hayden

Tide Pride

Staci Ramsey proud of Texas roots and Bama softball

There are no boundaries on pride. And Alabama softball star Staci Ramsey has enough to fill two states–one of them Texas. And that's a good thing.

A four-year starter at third base for the national powerhouse Alabama softball team, Ramsey is a native of Houston, Texas. She is extremely proud to be both of those.

"It's something that's always been with me," she said of her Texas pride. "I'm very much a country girl and people stereotype Texas as being country. It's kind of a big pride thing. I'm very proud of where I came from. I don't have any shame in the way I was brought up or being country. When I got here, everybody saw that I was really into country music and just a good ol' country girl and I took on that pride. Even in my house, my bathroom is all Texas flags. I love the state of Texas, I love being there. It's a great place to be. I was at home this winter break and we were driving to my brother's. It's flat land and I love driving through there. It's so welcoming to me."

And she doesn't hide the pride as fans can often see it spill over into her play on the field for the Crimson Tide.

"When you go somewhere and you're from somewhere else, you want to show the people how you want to represent where you come from," she said. "I wanted to represent where I came from with pride and I wanted to make everybody in my hometown and where I came from very proud of me. I wanted to show people in Alabama that the kids in Texas can play and they do have the ability to perform with anybody. I'm proud to play for The University of Alabama, I'm proud to live in Alabama, just as much as I am in Texas."

The loud, boisterous third baseman has helped lead the Tide to two appearances in the Women's College World Series. And the key word is "lead." While Ramsey is vocal, she has certainly led by example, coming up with one big hit or defensive gem after another.

In only the second game of her collegiate career, Ramsey recorded the game-winning RBI against Florida International, the first of many such deliveries. She continued her clutch performances all season leading the team to a berth in the Women's College World Series. It was there on the national stage that she let the softball world know that she was a force to be reckoned with.

With Alabama trailing the Oklahoma Sooners 3-0, Ramsey took a 2-1 pitch and lifted it over the centerfield fence, recording the first Alabama home run at the World Series. It helped ignite the team as Bama tied the powerful, experienced Sooners and sent the game into extra innings. And while Alabama was unable to come out victorious, it was a sign of things to come from the Texan.

"I didn't know it was over the fence until I saw everybody cheering," Ramsey said. "It was so exciting, knowing that we had a chance to keep going; it was unbelievable. It was like 'Not only are we here, but we're doing firsts and I'm doing firsts.'

"I hit it and it was like, 'Did that really happen? No way!' It was icing on the cake for me. When I hit that home run, I was fired up and ready to go. I was trying to help the team get into it and let them know we weren't out of it, that we still had a shot.'"

Since that time Ramsey always seems to be the person to come up in the clutch situations. Whether it's a base hit when the team desperately needs one, or a sacrifice bunt, or a play at third base to get the defense out of a jam, she has a history of success. She always seems to be in the mix as her numbers suggest.

Ramsey, one of only two Alabama players to record multiple grand slams in her career, has a string of clutch successes. For instance:

Midway through her senior season, she has recorded a grand slam that proved to be the game winner; she hit a home run that tied the game against defending national champion and then fifth-ranked Michigan (Alabama went on to win the game 3-2); she hit a walk-off, two-run home run against Florida; she tied her career high for hits in a game, going 4-5 against Drake; she recorded the game-winning RBI against Coastal Carolina, Florida and South Carolina as well as scoring the game-winning run against Drake.

Ramsey said, "My brothers are very intense with sports in general and they had a lot to do with me playing and the type of athlete I am. I'm a very competitive person; I've always been that way and I've always thrived on coming up in those situations. Those situations mean I get to do something that will make somebody else–my team–happy. I'll be able to do something for somebody else. I love to be there, in that excitement where I have a chance to make a difference. I like the chance to do something to get the rest of my team excited. I know that I can do that. I have the ability to help our team be better."

But while she gets satisfaction from achievements, she gets more satisfaction from the excitement and happiness her heroics bring her teammates.

Ramsey explained part of the motivation for her success in sports. She said, "When I was 12 I was told that I would never be anybody; that I would never be able to go anywhere and play ball. Since then, I've always said 'I'm going to prove you wrong.' It's that drive to prove them wrong that keeps me going; I'm going to show them that I'm better than what they think and I'm good enough to be where I am."

She said, "I've always had coaches that were on me and chewing me up and down and it made me a better player because it made me work myself harder and made me a better athlete."

She said if she can do something to bring happiness to her teammates or to Alabama Head Coach Patrick Murphy or his assistants, Aly Habetz or Vann Studeeman, "is something I thrive on. I love it."

Following her senior season, Ramsey hopes to continue playing softball at the professional level. If that doesn't work out, she plans to remain in the sport on the coaching end, a job that would suit her just fine.

"I want to go as far as I can," she said. "I'd like to play pro this year and if it happens it happens; if it doesn't I'm going to be a coach when I get finished. I'm going to stay a part of it. I love coaching, I love being able to teach kids what I know, try to give them that love for the game that I have. I love seeing them get better and grow. It'll always be a part of me, whether I'm playing or not. One of my friends once told me 'If you love your job, you'll never work a day in your life.' That's what softball means to me."

And Staci Ramsey means a lot to her Alabama teammates, coaches, and fans, and to her friends and family in Texas. "I'm grateful for being here," she said. "I love this place. I love the people here and thank God for it. God Bless Alabama!" ■

Ramsey is solid in the Tide infield.

Photo: University of Alabama

By Jeff Dunnavant

Off To Camp

Alabama offers instructional camps in virtually every sport

Once upon a time, kids were packed up and headed off to camp to learn to canoe or ride horses, pick up a few crafts skills, and, hopefully, learn a little self-reliance. There were Scout camps and church camps and the like. And for several decades there have also been camps operated by coaches as a "summer job."

But in the past few years, the sports camps have become far more important to both the coaches (who still derive some income from such enterprises) and for the youth (who still get the benefits of learning something new from outstanding coaches). Now sports camps such as those available in virtually every sport from University of Alabama coaches have the benefit of providing coaches an up-close look at potential future recruits and of giving athletes a chance to show their skills with the possibility of later earning a scholarship.

There is the additional value of a young athlete having the opportunity to perform on the same fields and courts as Crimson Tide athletes.

Here are some of the camps offered from Alabama coaches. If you don't see the one you want, call (205) 348-6161 and you can get information. (As of this writing, information was not available on baseball and gymnastics camps. There are also Alabama camps in cheerleading and for dance team members.)

FOOTBALL

The University of Alabama football program will provide youngsters of every age the chance to take part in an Alabama Football Camp this summer. Five camps in all will take place in the month of June.

The general camp will consist of two sessions, the first of which will be open to those in grades 2-8 and the second open to those in high school. Each camp will run over a two-day period and coaches will teach the basics.

Alabama's other three camps are all specialty camps. On June 10 and June 11 the Tide will welcome seniors to the Capstone showcase their talents and gear up for their final year of high school football. Then on June 14-15 Alabama will host a team camp that will feature an emphasis in seven-on-seven drills as well as offensive and defensive line instruction.

2006 Session 1 (Grades 2-8)
June 3-4, 2006
2006 Mini Camp 1 (Seniors Only)
June 10, 2006
2006 Mini Camp 2 (Seniors Only)
June 11, 2006
2006 Session 2 (Grades 9-12)
June 12-14, 2006
2006 Team Camp (7 on 7/OL/DL)
June 14-15, 2006
For more information, contact:
The Football Camp
P.O. Box 870323
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0323
Phone: (205) 348-0808

MEN'S BASKETBALL

The 2006 Mark Gottfried Basketball Camps will take place this June and will provide participants with a unique experience while playing inside Coleman Coliseum. Individuals can choose between four possible camps that better suit each player: Parent-Child Camp, Individual Camp (two sessions), Day Camp and Shooting Camp (two sessions). There will also be two high school Team Camps running June 16-18 and June 23-25.

The Parent-Child Camp is one of the more unique sports camps offered at the University. The camp spans the weekend of June 9-10 and provides the adult and child a chance to develop a bond through basketball. In individual camps, each player will participate in fundamental instruction while learning the basics of the game of basketball. For ages 5-12, the Day Camp and Shooting Camps will provide them the opportunity to improve their skills through various basketball drills.

Each Team Camp will take place over a three day period and guarantees each high school team eight games, all officiated by AHSAA referees with awards going to championship winning teams. Coaches will also be provided with apparel.

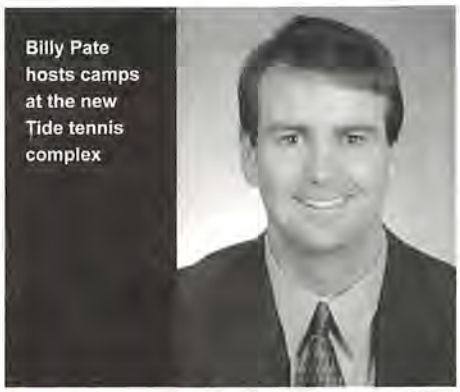
Boarding options are available for both individuals and teams.

Team Camp I, II
June 16-18, June 23-25
Boarding Campers $150
Non-Boarding Campers (with meals) $100
Non-Boarding Campers (w/o meals) $80
Parent-Child Camp
June 9-10
Boarding $200
Non-Boarding $185
Individual Camp I, II
June 11-14, June 18-21
Boarding $315
Non-Boarding $265
Day Camp
June 12-14
$100
Shooting Camp I, II
June 14, 21
$70
Contact Info:
Bama Hoops Basketball Camp, Inc.
BOX 870393
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0393
Phone: (205) 348-4551
Fax: (205) 348-7417

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The entire Lady Tide Basketball staff will instruct four camps this summer for interested participants of all ages and skill levels.

High school varsity players are invited to take part in the Crimson Tide's Elite Camp June 2-4. The Elite Camp will feature advanced skill work in all aspects of the game to help foster player development. Participants will also receive instruction on weight training, academic success and NCAA requirements.



Billy Pate hosts camps at the new Tide tennis complex

Photo: University of Alabama

Younger players can participate in the Tide's Fundamentals and Pee Wee Camps that will run simultaneously June 5-8. The Fundamentals camp is open to those in grades 5-12 while the Pee Wee Camp is open to ages 5-8. Each player will receive skill instruction and will be graded throughout the week on her improvement. Overnight and commuter options are available for the Fundamentals camps.

The final camp of the summer will be open to high school varsity and junior varsity teams. Each team will face highly competitive competition and is guaranteed eight games over the three day camp.

Elite Camp (H.S. Varsity Athletes Only)
June 2-4
Overnight $125
Commuter $100
Fundamentals Camp (Grades 5-12)
June 5-8
Early Registration/Overnight $320
Late Registration (after May 19) $345
Early Registration/Commuter $270
Late Registration (after May 19) $295
Pee Wee Camp (Ages 5-8)
une 5-8
Early Registration $175
Late Registration (after May 19) $200
Team Camp I, II
June 26-28, June 29-July 1
Overnight (room & board) $150
Commuter (2 meals/day) $100
Commuter (no meals) $80
Minimum of 10 players per team
For more information:
University of Alabama Women's Basketball
Box 870393
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0393
Phone (205) 348-7077
Fax (205) 348-9770

MEN'S GOLF

The Alabama men's golf team will hold its 2006 Crimson Tide Golf Academy June 10-14. The Golf Academy will be open to all boys and girls between the ages of 10-18 and all participants will be grouped by age and ability. Campers will get instruction from fourth-year Coach Jay Seawell, David Seawell (3-time All-America and PGA Tour player), and current

members of the UA golf team.

Much of the Academy will be held at the state-of-the-art Jerry Pate Golf Center. There, campers will receive professional golf swing instruction through video analysis. The Academy will also emphasize the short game, tournament preparation and practice skills.

2006 Crimson Tide Golf Academy

June 10-14

Overnight $865

Day $715

*$300 deposit due by June 1, 2006

For more information, call (205) 348-0383.

WOMEN'S GOLF

The University of Alabama women's golf team will host the NIKE Golf School and Junior Camps at Ol' Colony Golf Club this June. All camps are open to both boys and girls and there will be several options for participants to choose from. Day and Mini Camps will run June 5-8 while the Resident Camp will run June 17-21.

Coach Mic Potter's Junior Day camps are designed to meet the needs of both the beginner and the experienced player with participants playing in groups with other players of similar age and ability. The Full Day camp will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. while the Mini-Camp will run from 9 a.m. to noon.

The Resident Camp is for interested participants ages 8-17. Campers will received instruction in all areas of their golf game and will stay on The University of Alabama campus at night. Each camper will receive a written analysis of progression and a DVD of swing analysis.

2006 Alabama NIKE Golf School and Junior Camps

Resident Camp

June 17-21

Resident Price $900

Commuter Price $800

Day and Mini-Camp

June 5-8

Day Price $290

Mini-Camp Price $175

SOCCER

Once again this summer the Alabama soccer staff will host several different soccer camps that will give all ages and skill levels the opportunity to work out with the Crimson Tide. The Don Staley Soccer Camps will run June 15-18 at The University of Alabama Soccer Complex.

There will be an Advanced Camp for both boy's and girls as well as an Elite Goalkeeper Academy and a Day Camp for locals. In each camp, participants will get the chance to work with UA coaches and other area coaches. Boarding is available only to girls. Each camper will also receive a soccer ball and camp t-shirt. For more information visit www.rolltide.com/soccer.

Advanced Camp (ages 11-18)

June 15-18

Boarding (girls only) $395

Day $295

Day Camp (ages 7-10)

June 15-18

$175

Elite Goalkeeper Academy

June 15-18

Boarding (girls only) $395

Day (boys and girls) $175

For more information please contact:

www.rolltide.com

(205)348-0143

dstaley@ia.ua.edu

SOFTBALL

The 2006 Patrick Murphy Softball School will have two opportunities for players to participate this summer, running June 12-15 for those in grades 8-12 and June 19-22 for those in grades 4-7. Coach Patrick Murphy and his staff provide an outstanding forum for young players to develop the skills necessary to reach their full potential in fastpitch softball.

Along with the fundamental skills of fastpitch, campers will also be taught about attitude, hard work ethic, and good character. Coach Murphy's personal contact with campers assures a positive environment for guidance and instruction. In addition to softball instruction, campers will be provided with nightly activities such as skit night and drive-in movie night at the UA Softball Stadium.

Session I (grades 8-12)

June 12-15

Overnight $375

Day $275

Session II (grades 4-7)

June 19-22

Overnight $375

Day $275

For more info please contact

Vann Stuedeman

205-348-4400

vstuedeman@ia.ua.edu

*Walk-up registration is prohibited

SWIMMING AND DIVING

Alabama Swimming will hold three summer camp sessions this June. Each session is open to boys and girls ages 8-18. The camp will provide each camper the unique opportunity to earn individual stroke instruction on the four major strokes from highly reguarded UA Swimming coaches. Campers will also learn about nutrition and race strategies that will help them better prepare for each race.

Each camper will receive a water bottle, an Alabama swim cap, an information packed notebook, a personalized CD-ROM and a TYR gift bag. Sessions will run May 29-June 3, June 5-10 and June 12-17. Team rates, day camps and multiple sessions are available upon request.

Session I

May 29-June 3

$425 per camper per week

$380 per week for additional camper per household.

Session II

June 5-10

$425 per camper per week

$380 per week for additional camper per household.

Session III

June 12-17

$425 per camper per week

$380 per week for additional camper per household.

For more info, please contact:

Alabama Summer Swim Camps

169 Aquatic Center

Box 870387

Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

TENNIS

Alabama Tennis, in association with NIKE's U.S. Sports Camps, will host the 2006 Crimson Tide Tennis Camps this June for ages 9-18. There will be two sessions running June 4-8 and June 11-15. Campers will play at one of the finest tennis complexes in the nation, which features twelve lighted outdoor courts, and four indoor courts at the Hank Crisp Indoor Facility. Campers also have access to the varsity track, swimming pools, and numerous recreational facilities. Off-court activities include a pizza party, games, and other social events.

Crimson Tide Men's Coach Billy Pate directs the camp. In his fourth year as head coach, he offers a long history of tennis coaching and camp experience. Assisting Coach Pate will be Assistant Coach Lee Nickell. He is in his second year with the Tide. For a typical daily schedule, interested campers should visit www.rolltide.com/tennis or www.ussportscamps.com.

For more information and price listings, please contact

Billy Pate, head coach

bpate@ia.ua.edu

VOLLEYBALL

Alabama Volleyball Coach Judy Green and staff will host the 2006 Judy Green Volleyball Camps this July in the CAVE, the home of Crimson Tide volleyball in Coleman Coliseum. UA will offer six sessions that will address all aspects and various skills of the game of volleyball, including Middle School Day Camp, two Individual All-Skills sessions, Team Camp, Elite Camp and Setter/Attacker Academy. There will be a coaches clinic on July 25 at a cost of $50, but is free to any coaches who have a team present at Team Camp.

Campers will gain instruction from Alabama coaches, current and former Alabama players and collegiate players and coaches from around the country. All camps have the option of overnight or commuter, with the exception of Middle School Day Camp.

Middle School Day Camp (ages 8-8th grade)

July 10-12

$100

Individual All-Skills Camp I, II (ages 8-high school senior)

July 14-16, July 16-18

Boarding $300

Non-Boarding $250

Elite Camp (College-bound players)

July 14-16

Boarding $350

Non-Boarding $300

Setter/Attacker Camp (ages 12-high school senior)

July 16-18

Boarding $300

Non-Boarding $250

Team Camp

July 23-26

Boarding and Transportation $350 per player

Boarding and No Transportation $325 per player

No Boarding and No Transportation $300 per player

Asst. Coaches $125 (room and board) ■

By Andrew Bone

Football Recruiting

Prep football stars will be in Scout.com Combines

The Scout.com Combines are making their 2006 tour looking for the high school football stars of the class of 2007. Scout.com is the Select Partner with the U. S. Army All-American game held each year in January in San Antonio, Texas.

The combines are part of the selection process as players from each region are selected from the combines out of approximately 200 invited only rising senior prospects at each location.

The tour opened in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on March 3 and made its way across the nation with stops scheduled in Waco, Texas; Jacksonville, Florida; Durham, North Carolina; Atlanta; Iowa City, Iowa; Tuscaloosa (on April 29); Oxford, Mississippi; Los Angeles; Boca Raton, Florida; and Louisville, Kentucky.

(To track all the results of each of the combines and view video of the top prospects and video interviews, www.scoutcombines.com. The site provides a message board for questions answered by Scout.com regional recruiting analysts–all touring each combine location.)

The combine involves the prospects being tested in skills, an NFL-type combine experience for each prospect with explanations provided by RedZone. The tests are:

20-Yard Shuttle–The 20-yard shuttle is one of the most underrated tests at the combine. The 20-yard shuttle is a test of speed, explosion, and changing of directions. Technique is also important. Each prospect is timed by seconds-how fast he goes five yards to the left, 10 back to the right, and finishing five yards to the left-in one straight line. It tests lateral quickness, coordination and change of direction.

Vertical Jump–The vertical jump isn't really the most important test for football players. It is basically a test of explosion and power. Technique is huge. Each player is tested by a machine that will measure how high his fingers touch when going directly up in the air. The vertical jump is most important for receivers and defensive backs. It tests vertical leg explosion.

Elliott McGaskin | Phelon Jones | Ricardo Bates | Ryan Williams

Photos: Scout.com

3-Cone Drill–The 3-cone drill is also a test of speed, explosion and changing directions. Each prospect is timed by seconds--how fast he sprints ten yards, back, back again, and around a third cone parallel to the second. This is a test for speed, quickness, flexibility, change of direction and body control.

40-Yard Dash–The 40-yard-dash is a test of speed, power and explosion. Each prospect is measured by the second and how long it takes to complete a 40-yard sprint. Perhaps the best-known of all the drills, this tests pure speed from Point A to Point B.

Broad Jump–The broad jump (or standing broad jump) simply measures how far the prospect can jump. Technique is also important here. It is similar to the long jump in track and field, but here the player will not run, but rather jump from a standing position. The broad jump is the best test for lower body strength, explosion and power. The broad jump is the most important for running backs, linemen and linebackers. This tests leg explosion, quickness and lateral burst.

The Scout.com All-American Combine at The University of Alabama April 29 has an impressive list of the top prospects in Alabama and names that are or will become well-known in recruiting news. Several out-of-state recruits will participate in the combine as well.

The highest in-state profile players are deep at the defensive back position in the class of 2007. Phelon Jones, Elliott McGaskin, Ryan Williams, Ricardo Bates, Corey Hart and Michael McNeil are the headliners. These top players will perform their skills on the Alabama campus.

Phelon Jones (6-0, 190) is from McGill-Toolen in Mobile holds offers from Alabama, Auburn, Ole Miss, Michigan, Ohio State, Nebraska, Virginia Tech, Louisville and Georgia Tech. An outstanding cornerback and strong bloodlines with older brother (Tiger) a former Louisville wide out now with Ottawa Canadian Football League.

"Alabama is moving up on my list," Jones said. "I didn't think too highly of them before I went up there. Alabama has a nice program, and a good coaching staff. I don't have an overall favorite, but Alabama and Auburn are at the top of the list."

Elliott McGaskin (6-1, 190) is from B.C. Rain in Mobile. He showcased his skills from his safety position at the U.S. Army National Combine for juniors in San Antonio and was named All-Combine.

McGaskin rushed for over 1,200 yards on offense during his junior campaign and recorded 95 tackles and one interception on defense.

"Alabama is my leader big-time," McGaskin said. "I don't even think I am going to visit any other colleges this spring. I am waiting on Alabama. I have heard they are going to wait until later in the spring before they offer me. I am ready to commit to Alabama."

Ryan Williams (5-11, 185), a teammate of McGaskin at B.C. Rain, was also named All-Combine in San Antonio. Williams had 10 receptions for 300 yards and four touchdowns

during his junior season. He recorded 50 tackles and four interceptions on defense.

Williams missed Junior Day at Alabama due to a track meet in Pensacola. He won the 100-meter in 10.7 and came in second in the 200.

"I don't have a favorite," Williams said. "I am looking at everyone. I am going to check-out the depth charts of each school. I want to find out where the best opportunity for me to get on the field soon."

Ricardo Bates (5-11, 170) is a top cornerback from Coach Bill Clark's well-known Prattville, defense. Bates recorded 65 tackles, three interceptions, one sack and returned an interception for a touchdown last year.

Bates has the Tide high on his list and said following his Junior Day visit, "The visit to Alabama was great. I really liked watching the players practice. Their practice is very similar to the way we practice."

Corey Hart (6-2, 203) is a talented safety prospect from Loachapoka. Hart was named all-state two years and hears from all the SEC schools on a regular basis as well as Georgia Tech and Indiana.

Hart said he doesn't have a favorite. "I am parked in neutral," he said. "I grew up favoring Alabama. That might have an impact on my decision, but for now I am going to remain idle."

Michael McNeil (6-2, 197) adds to the talented group of safeties in the class of 2007. He is from Davidson in Mobile. McNeil's favorites include Alabama, LSU, Georgia Tech and Florida State.

Other defensive backs attending the combine include: Cornelius Allen (Milton, Florida), Kenneth Baker (Homewood), Bobby Jordan (Bob Jones in Madison), Eric Collins II (Bob Jones), Sam Edgmon (Giles County, Tennessee), Chris Booker (Brantley), Desmond Holloway (Lafayette), Le.Marcus Gibson (Harrison-Central, Mississippi), Travis Means (Davidson),Ferson Stafford (Central of Phenix City) Frederick Gray (Gadsden) and Michael Howell (B.C. Rain).

Alabama is looking to sign several linebackers in 2007, and the state is loaded at this position. Combine participants will include Rolando McClain, Eltoro Freeman, Terrance Thomas, Jonathan Beasley, Jeffrey Daniels, Herschel Houston, Michael DeJohn and Jonathan Birmingham.

Caleb Thomas | Eltoro Freeman | Herschel Houston | Michael McNeil

Photos: Scout.com

Rolando McClain (6-4, 230) is one of the top linebackers in the Southeast for 2007. From Decatur, McClain had an impressive junior season recording 104 tackles, four sacks, one interception, three forced fumbles and one fumble recovery. He recorded 24 receptions for 436 yards from his tight end position. Among his SEC offers is one from Bama.

Eltoro Freeman (6-0, 205) was one of the top performers in the Alabama Junior All-Star game. From Benjamin Russell in Alexander, City, the star recorded 100 tackles, 52 tackles for loss, and eight sacks last year.

Jeffrey Daniels (6-2, 230) recorded 158 tackles and five interceptions from his linebacker position during his junior campaign at Brantley. All SEC schools are recruiting him.

Herschel Houston (6-0, 220) finished his junior year at Centre Cherokee County with 1,865 yards and 28 touchdowns. Houston is a versatile athlete capable of several positions at the next level including fullback and running back.

"While I was growing up I always liked Alabama," Houston said. "My uncle [Martin] played there so that was a big reason why I liked them. I have always been around Alabama football."

Michael DeJohn (6-0, 220) comes from Hoover, one of the strongest high school football programs in the country. DeJohn has the Tide rated high early in the recruiting process. "I am highly interested in Alabama," he said. "They have always been my favorite school."

Jonathan Birmingham (6-0, 205) recorded 74 tackles, three interceptions and three forced fumbles during his junior campaign at Benjamin Russell in Alex City.

"I liked the linebackers coach [Joe Kines]," Birmingham said after his visit for Junior Day in Tuscaloosa. "I like how he coaches. I think I would fit in real well with Alabama's defense."

Jonathan Beasley (6-2, 215) had a productive junior campaign at Jeff Davis in Montgomery recording 80 tackles and six sacks from his linebacker position. He was named All-Metro, honorable mention all-state and participated in the Alabama Junior All-Star game.

Terrance Thomas (6-0, 215) was a top performer in the Junior All-Star game in December held each year in Troy. All the SEC schools are recruiting him. He said, "Alabama is my overall favorite. I feel like it's a program that would be better for me athletically and academically."

Other linebackers attending the combine include: Tony Johnson (Milton, Florida), Riley Barnacastle (John Carroll), Kenneth Dorsey (Homewood), Rodney Guins (Cedar Bluff), Dexter Daniels (Brantley), Patrick Thomas (Etowah) and William Thomas (Greenville).

Alabama signed one of the top offensive line classes in the country in 2006, but the Tide is anxious to build depth and continue to add the "big uglies" up-front. Several in-state prospects at the combine include Ryan Pugh, Caleb Thomas, Austin Hayes, William Vlachos, Lionel Henderson, Rodney Hudson and out-of-state performer Chaz Ramsey.

Ryan Pugh (6-3, 275) is from Spain Park in Hoover and a class 6A all-state performer. He has received several scholarship offers from across the SEC and said, "I didn't grow up a fan of any certain school. Both of my parents grew up in Auburn and went to Auburn, but they are not putting any pressure on me. They want me to make the best decision for myself."

Caleb Thomas (6-3, 290) had an impressive performance at the U.S. Army All-American combine for juniors in San Antonio. "I really like both Alabama and Auburn because they are in-state and close to home," Thomas said. "I'll go anywhere though. I didn't really grow up favoring any school. My dad graduated from Ole Miss."

Austin Hayes | Brandon Gibson | Nick Gentry | Sidell Corley

Photos: Scout.com

Austin Hayes (6-3, 240) had an impressive junior year recording 100 tackles, 16 for loss. and seven sacks. He was all-state, Player of the Year finalist (1A), and County Defensive Player of the Year. He played in the Alabama Junior All-Star game and the San Antonio combine.

William Vlachos (6-2, 300) was selected to play in the Alabama Junior All-Star game for his junior performance at Mountain Brook. "I have been going to Alabama games my whole life," Vlachos said. "I like the tradition and the fans."

Lionel Henderson a big guard from Davidson in Mobile, prefers leaving the state, but this is early in the recruiting process. "They are a hard nosed, smash mouth football program," Henderson said of Alabama. "I can relate to that because that's how we play here at Davidson. They are in need of some lineman as well."

Rodney Hudson (6-3, 285) is from B.C. Rain in Mobile and favors the SEC schools as well as Clemson. "Alabama is close to home," he said.

Chaz Ramsey (6-4, 275), one of the top lineman in the South, hails from Madison Central, (Mississippi). Ramsey recorded 108 pancake blocks, allowed just two sacks, and graded 89 per cent as a junior. He also participated in the combine in San Antonio.

Additional offensive lineman attending: Ben Park (Hewitt-Trussville), Chris Gibson (Hewitt-Trussville), Taz Tillery (Russellville), Jared Cooper (W.S. Neal), Jason Adams (Foley), Michael Turner (Davidson), Harold Powell (Carver of Montgomery) and Henry Porter (Opelika).

The defensive lineman for the class of 2007 showcases several high-profile recruits including Sidell Corley, Nick Gentry, Kerry Murphy, Alfred McCullough, Nick Fairley, D.J. Looney and Drew Traylor. They will prove their talent at the combine against some of the best talented offensive lineman in the South.

Sidell Corley (6-4, 248) recorded 9.5 sacks and 17.5 tackles for a loss during his junior season at defensive end for McGill-Toolen in Mobile. He was a standout at both the Alabama Junior All-Star game in Troy and in the San Antonio combine.

Corley has received numerous scholarship offers including Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Miami, Notre Dame, Oregon, Ole Miss, Mississippi State and Louisville. He does not name an overall favorite.

"My overall thought about Alabama is there is playing time available for me," Corley said. "There is a good chance I can get on the field early, and I feel like I would fit in with their defense."

"Coach Shula is a people person," Corley said. "I feel like I can talk to him all day long. I think he is a really good guy."

Nick Gentry (6-3, 270) was named 6A all-state for his junior season at Prattville. He recorded 100 tackles, 52 tackles for loss, 22 sacks, five pass knock-downs, and two forced fumbles.

"The visit to Alabama was awesome," Gentry said after Junior Day in Tuscaloosa. "Everything they were doing during practice was like the way we do it at Prattville. I feel like if I went there then I would be step ahead of everyone else coming in. Alabama is a top priority school. Everything is top-notch."

Kerry Murphy (6-4, 315) is receiving a lot of interest with several scholarship offers already coming his way in Hoover. Ole Miss was the first to extend an offer and Alabama, Auburn, Texas, Clemson, and Louisville have jumped on board as well.

Murphy grew up an Alabama fan, and he likes the location for his close-knit family.

Alfred McCullough (6-3, 297) recorded 67 tackles, 16 tackles for loss, 11 sacks, and six pass break-ups during his junior campaign at Athens. McCullough,s first scholarship offer was from Alabama.

Nick Fairley (6-4, 255) was a standout performer the past two seasons on the offensive and defensive line. However, he expects to play a different position on the next level. "I am being recruited by most schools to play tight end," he said. He is hearing from several elite college programs across the Southeast.

D.J. Looney (6-2, 280) of Oak Mountain in Birmingham was a top performer in the Alabama Junior All-Star game. The SEC schools are recruiting.

Drew Traylor (6-5, 220) recorded 61 tackles, 12 tackles for loss, and five quarterback sacks during his junior season at Mountain Brook. He was Class 5A all-state and played in the Alabama Junior All-Star game. SEC schools are showing interest.

"I am being recruited as a defensive end," Traylor said. "I use my height as an advantage. My speed helps me with containment as well."

Mountain Brook Coach Joey Jones said, "Drew has a chance to be a very good college football player. He is tall and very athletic. He has broad shoulders. He could add 40 more pounds easily. He has a very good motor."

Other defensive lineman participating in the combine include: Kendall Dangerfield (Giles County, Tennessee), Brandon Dorsey (Auburn) Beau Godwin (Straughn), McKale Hughley (Lafayette), Karlos Jones (Athens), Courtney Ray (Lafayette), D.J. Reese (Daphne) Darnodo Smith (Carver of Montgomery) and Codi Taylor (Fairhope).

The six highest profile quarterbacks in the state, Ross Wilson, Larry Smith, Roosevelt Byrd, Zach Smith, Chris Lambeth and Chip Ghinga will get their chance at the combine in Tuscaloosa. (Alabama is recruiting several out-of-state quarterbacks who are listed and updated on a regular basis on BamaMag.com.)

Ross Wilson (5-11, 180) As a junior, he was forced to miss a couple of football games due to injury, but still managed to pass for 2,950 yards with 31 touchdowns in Hoover's high octane offense. He helped lead the Bucs to a fourth consecutive Class 6A state championship.

The 5-11, 180-pound athlete stars as a shortstop in the spring batting over .400 last season, four home runs and recorded 16 doubles.

Wilson is recruited by several elite programs for both sports, and is the brother of

Tide quarterback John Parker Wilson.

"I really haven't decided what I am going to do yet," Wilson said. "I have a lot of schools in the SEC and ACC recruiting me for both sports right now."

Larry Smith (6-2,200) passed for 2,005 yards with 18 touchdowns and only two interceptions during his junior season at Prattville. He participated in the Alabama Junior All-Star game.

Roosevelt Byrd (6-1, 200) has been outstanding for Todd Watson's Lions at Foley. An all-state performer and Most Valuable Player of the Alabama Junior All-Star game for the South squad, one of Byrd's best performances came in a loss to Daphne in which he was 24-38 for 438 yards and two touchdowns.

Zach Smith (6-2, 190) has been a starter since his ninth grade season at Susan Moore in Blountsville. He has passed for approximately 6,000 career yards going into his senior season. He was named Most Valuable of the Alabama Junior All-Star game for the North squad.

Chris Lambeth (6-1, 198) passed for nearly 2,000 yards during his junior season and only six interceptions from Daphne. He led his team to the Alabama 6A state championship. Lambeth sports a GPA of 3.20 and ACT score of 21.

Chip Ghinga (6-3, 205) has played back-up quarterback to Austin Hubbard at Homewood. He is new on the recruiting radar due to his secondary role. The powerhouse Patriots will give him a chance to showcase his talents. The Scout.com All-American combine, and the summer camp circuit will gain him necessary exposure.

Alabama will look to add a couple of sure-handed wide receivers in 2007, and the state boasts several talented wideouts in Brandon Gibson, Christian Smith, Zack Shaw, Sam Edwards and Nate Carlson.

Brandon Gibson (6-2, 190) had an impressive junior season at UMS-Wright in Mobile with 43 catches for 750 yards and 13 touchdowns. Gibson was all-state team as an athlete as a junior.

Alabama was the first school to extend a scholarship offer and Gibson said, "I really feel like in my heart I will commit to Alabama. I definitely wouldn't rule out the possibility of me committing early."

Christian Smith (6-2, 210) has received a lot of attention from college coaches after a great junior campaign at Huffman in Birmingham with over 500 yards rushing and over 400 yards receiving. Smith is the younger brother of Tide signee and Scout.com number one offensive lineman in the country, Andre Smith.

Christian Smith | Darnell Ratcliff | Zack Shaw

Photos: Scout.com

When asked at the San Antonio combine if he would follow Andre to college, the younger Smith said, "I probably will attend the same school. It's almost definite I will go wherever he goes." Alabama has extended a scholarship offer.

Zack Shaw (6-2, 190) is a versatile athlete from Trinity Presbyterian in Montgomery, His biggest strength is versatility. He plays three or four offensive positions, special teams, and defense.

Shaw threw one touchdown pass, scored 10 touchdowns on the ground, and scored four touchdowns by receptions. Spring training will determine his position for his senior year.

Sam Edwards (6-2, 175) recorded 43 receptions for 624 yards and six touchdowns during his junior season at Clay-Chalkville. He favors the SEC schools and Florida State.

Nate Carlson (6-3, 205) recorded 27 receptions for 522 yards and scored nine touchdowns during his junior season at Mountain Brook. He participated in the Alabama Junior All-Star game.

Additional wide receivers expected at the combine include: Justin Diliberto (Spain Park), DeMarcus Covington (John Carroll), Anthony Jelks (Gadsden), Anthony McCall (Montgomery Academy), Stanley Jones (Houston Academy), Richie Henderson (Daphne), Cameron Hebert (Berry), DeShawn Caldwell (Calhoun), Chris Harvey (Daphne), Joshua Blackmon (Hueytown), Marquez Strickland (Opelika), Jacquez Pride (Athens), Steve Dennis (Bob Jones), Tyler Robbins (Homewood), and tight end prospects Josh Somerville (Aliceville) and Omar Keon Stewart (Central-Phenix City).

The Scout.com All-American combine will feature several running backs including high-profile prospects of Terrell Edwards, Herschel Houston (listed under linebackers), Terrence Wilkes, and out-of-state Darnell Ratcliff.

Terrell Edwards (6-2, 210) rushed for 751 yards with an average of 11.3 yards per carry and scored 15 touchdowns from UMS-Wright in Mobile. He is spectacular on special teams with three kick-offs, and one punt return for touchdowns.

"I am going to explore all of my options, but Alabama is definitely high on my list," Edwards said.

Terrance Wilkes (5-8, 165) rushed for 2,883 yards at Wadley. He broke the state record with 47 rushing touchdowns. Wilkes had a great performance in the Alabama Junior All-Star game. Alabama and Auburn are his favorites.

Darnell Ratcliff (5-11, 187) was named all-conference the past three seasons at King High School in Chicago. He recorded over 1,500 yards on 200 carries with 20 touchdowns during his junior campaign.

Ratcliff visited one of the Tide's early practice sessions in February and said, "I thought the practice was excellent. I was very impressed with the running backs. I have seen a few of them on TV before, and they are good. I think all the coaches at Alabama are excellent. All the coaches seemed like they took time out to explain anything to anybody. They care about their players."

Additional running backs confirmed for the combine include: Ron Belser (Carver-Montgomery), Marcus Cox (Baldwin County), Al Hackworth (Hueytown), Patrick Adair (Holtville), Keon Jenkins (Calhoun), Dennis King (Hoover), Rico Sharpe (Hewitt-Trussville) Warren Wilkins (Bob Jones), Darrius Williams (Daphne) and LaDarius Wood (Homewood).

The Scout.com All-American combine is limited to elite prospects for the class of 2007. This is a partial list of the players invited to attend. ■

HOT LIST 2007 ALABAMA FOOTBALL PROSPECTS

A major college football team does not wait long after Signing Day to begin lining up the next year's class. In fact, much of the work with upcoming seniors has already been done. Nevertheless, offers and visits and the majority of recruiting is now under way. Here are some outstanding high school football prospects who have been identified with Alabama, although–to be sure–this is not Alabama's official recruiting list. There are almost certainly some on this list who will not be recruited by Alabama. Even more certain is that there are players not on this list who will be recruited by the Crimson Tide.

NAME	POS	HGT	WGT	40-TIME	HOMETOWN (HIGH SCHOOL)
Allen Bailey	DE	6-4	245	4.8	Darien, Ga. (McIntosh Co. Academy)
Riley Barnacastle	S-LB	6-2	195	4.5	Birmingham (John Carroll)
Richardo Bates	DB	5-11	170	4.5	Prattville
Jonathan Beasley	LB	6-2	215	4.7	Montgomery (Jeff Davis)
Jonathan Birmingham	LB	6-0	205	4.65	Alex City (Benjamin Russell)
John Brantley	QB	6-2	180	N/A	Ocala, Fla. (Trinity Catholic)
John Brown	DT	6-1	285	N/A	Lakeland, Fla.
Kodi Burns	QB	6-2	190	N/A	Fort Smith, Ark. (Northside)
Todd Campbell	WR	6-1	190	N/A	Franklin, Tenn.
Nate Carlson	WR	6-3	205	4.56	Birmingham (Briarwood Christian)
Sidell Corley	DE	6-4	248	4.85	Mobile (McGill-Toolen)
Jeffrey Daniels	LB	6-2	230	4.8	Brantley
Dionte Davis	LB	6-1	225	4.6	Tallahassee, Fla. (Godby)
Roderick Davis	WR	6-0	180	N/A	Memphis (Wooddale)
Michael DeJohn	LB	6-0	220	4.7	Birmingham (Hoover)
Antwon Dixon	WR	6-1	195	4.6	Terry, Miss.
Jonathan Dwyer	RB	6-0	200	4.6	Marietta, Ga. (Kell)
Sam Edwards	WR	6-2	175	4.55	Pinson (Clay-Chalkville)
Terrell Edwards	RB	6-2	210	4.6	Mobile (UMS Wright)
Art Evans	CB-WR	6-1	175	4.48	Lakeland, Fla. (Evangel Christian)
Mark Fisher	OG-DE	6-4	280	5.3	Madison, Tenn. (Goodpasture)
Chris Forcier	QB	6-3	180	4.5	San Diego, Calif. (St. Augustine)
Etoro Freeman	LB	6-0	205	4.5	Alex City (Benjamin Russell)
Will Furlong	OL	6-5	260	5.2	Deland, Fla.
Nick Gentry	DT	6-3	270	4.78	Prattville
Brandon Gibson	WR	6-2	190	4.55	Mobile (UMS Wright)
Larry Harris	LB	6-0	189	4.85	Atlanta, Ga. (McNair)
Corey Hart	S-WR	6-2	203	4.6	Loachapoka
Austin Hayes	OL	6-3	240	5.0	Cedar Bluff
Lionel Henderson	OL	6-4	280	4.94	Mobile (Davidson)
Herschel Houston	RB	6-0	220	4.6	Centre (Cherokee Co.)
Rodney Hudson	L	6-3	285	5.2	Mobile (B.C. Rain)
Kyle Jackson	LB	6-1	220	4.85	McDonough, Ga. (Union Grove)
Nathan Jew	RB	5-10	193	4.55	Jackson, Miss. (Jackson Academy)
Chad Jones	S	6-2	210	N/A	Baton Rouge, La. (SU Lab)
Phelon Jones	CB-WR	6-0	190	4.38	Mobile (McGill-Toolen)
Roddy Jones	RB	5-8	183	4.58	Chamblee, Ga.
G.J. Kinne	QB	6-1	215	4.6	Canton, Texas
Pat Lazear	LB	6-1	215	4.6	Bethesda, Md. (Walt Whitman)
D.J. Looney	DT	6-2	280	5.3	Birmingham (Oak Mountain)
Keith McCaskill	DE	6-2	220	4.8	Tallahassee, Fla. (Godby)
Rolando McClain	LB	6-4	230	4.68	Decatur
Alfred McCullough	DT	6-3	297	5.1	Athens
Elliott McGaskin	S	6-1	190	4.5	Mobile (B.C. Rain)
Michael McNeil	S-WR	6-2	197	4.5	Mobile (Davidson)
Travis Means	DB	5-10	175	N/A	Mobile (Davidson)
Dave Molk	OG	6-2	270	5.0	Lemont, Ill. (Lemont Township)
Jason Munns	QB	6-5	235	N/A	Kennewick, Wash. (Southridge)
Josh Nesbitt	QB	6-1	200	4.55	Greensboro, Ga. (Greene Co.)
Andrew Nowels	QB	6-4	210	4.8	Clearwater, Fla. (Central Catholic)
Mike Paulus	QB	6-5	208	4.8	Shyracuse, N.Y. (Christian Bros. Acad.)
Chaz Ramsey	OL	6-4	260	N/A	Madison, Miss. (Central)
Darnell Ratcliff	RB	5-11	187	4.5	Chicago (King)
Chris Ruffin	WR	5-11	165	4.5	New York (Wadleigh)
Rico Sharpe	RB	6-0	190	4.5	Trussville (Hewitt-Trussville)
Zack Shaw,	WR	6-2	190	4.6	Montgomery (Trinity Presbyterian)
Derek Sherrod	OL	6-6	298	N/A	Caledonia, Miss.
Christian Smith	WR	6-2	210	4.5	Birmingham (Huffman)
Larry Smith	QB	6-2	200	4.6	Prattville
Zach Smith	QB	6-2	190	4.5	Blountsville (Susan Moore)
Marquez Strickland	WR	6-2	195	4.55	Opelika
Caleb Thomas	OL	6-3	290	5.4	Decatur
Terrence Thomas	LB	6-0	215	4.6	Eufaula
Drew Traylor	DE	6-5	220	4.7	Mountain Brook
Courtney Viney	CB	5-8	170	N/A	Fresno, Calif. (Edison)
William Vlachos	OL	6-2	300	5.1	Mountain Brook
Alton Voss	QB	6-3	215	N/A	New Port Richey, Fla. (Gulf)
Terrence Wilkes	RB	5-8	165	4.45	Wadley
Ryan Williams	CB	5-11	185	4.5	Mobile (B.C. Rain)
James Wilson	OL	6-4	305	N/A	St. Augustine, Fla. (Nease)
Ross Wilson	QB	5-11	180	4.6	Birmingham (Hoover)
Lee Ziemba	OL	6-6	285	N/A	Rogers, Ark.

By Erik Stinnett

Where Are They Now?

Healthier Shannon Brown making impact as prep coach

Thanks to surgery in February to remove an inch-and-a-half long bone spur, Shannon Brown's long-bothersome right shoulder is not the daily burden it once was. Other than that, not much has changed about the Millbrook native since he wore the crimson and white 11 years ago.

Back in the early to mid-1990s, Brown helped spearhead some of Coach Gene Stallings' finest defenses. While the 6-5, 266-pound defensive tackle might not have been the most athletically gifted of the players in a string of defensive units that were loaded with talent, he was certainly one of the most inspiring.

A football player in every sense of the word, Brown is one of those many believe would have been successful in any era of the game. He played with passion, with heart, with relentless abandon and he played through searing pain. And because of his maximum-effort style of play and his blue-collar attitude he was always a favorite of teammates, coaches, fans, and the media.

Proof of just what a lasting mark Brown has left on Alabama's rich football history is the fact that he was one of four defensive linemen named to Alabama's Team of the Decade for the 1990s. The other three were Eric Curry, John Copeland and Cornelius Griffin.

"I guess I must have done something right while I was there," Brown said of the honor. "But the thing is, The University of Alabama owes me nothing. It was just a privilege for me to play there. I would give just about anything if I could stand on that field one more time and hear the yells of 'Roll Tide' and hear the Alabama Crimson Tide faithful. If you could bottle that up and sell it, you'd be the richest guy in town."

Brown's football-playing days may be over, but that doesn't mean he's not still leaving a powerful impression on others. The 34-year-old currently serves as the head football coach at Bob Jones High School in Madison, and, in two short years, Brown has revived the previously moribund program. After going 3-7 his first year, Bob Jones went 7-5 in 2005 which included the school's first state playoff appearance since 1997 and first state playoff win since 1987. Brown's squad knocked off Huffman in postseason play before losing to eventual state champ Hoover.

"Making it to the second round of the state playoffs last year was by far the biggest highlight of my coaching career," Brown said. "Playing Hoover offered us a great measuring stick. What we found out is that we've still got a long way to go to get to where we want, but we're not as far back as we were."

Even more important to Brown than the results on the field is the impact he's making on the lives of his players.

"What I really want to do is prepare these guys for battle – not just the battle on the field but the biggest battle of all, which is the battle of life," said Brown, who's been coaching prep football since 1999. "I want them to learn the value of not giving up when the chips are down and how to bow your back and keep fighting when things don't go your way. If they learn those lessons, the winning will take care of itself. When guys come back five years from now and say to me, 'Thank you, coach Brown. You made a difference in my life,' that's what it's all about."

For Brown, that's not just cliché-filled coach-speak. Matt Parker, a teammate of Brown's at Alabama and a close friend to this day, recalls one particular instance that shows just how serious Brown is about helping prepare his players for life.

"Two of his players weren't making the grades, so Shannon made both of them sit out the next game," Parker said. "But they didn't just sit out. Shannon made them stand there on the sideline with their book bags on their back to help get the point across."

Added Brown, a three-time Academic All-SEC selection while at Alabama: "Sure we want to win a state championship, but there's a bigger picture to high school football than the trophies and plaques."

When it comes to being a coach, there's little doubt Brown learned from some of the all-time best. In high school, Brown played at Millbrook for Jimmy Foshee, a member of the Alabama High School Athletics Association Hall of Fame. That was followed by five years at Alabama under Stallings, who, with Brown as a back-up nose tackle, guided the Tide to a national championship in 1992. Brown's position coach at Alabama was Mike DuBose, who isn't remembered as a great head coach but who is still widely considered to have been one of Alabama's all-time top defensive assistant coaches.

"You can say what you want to about Coach DuBose, but he did so much to help me grow up and be a man – just the way he talked to us on the field and off," Brown said. "He demanded the very best from us. He prepared me for the NFL."

In the pros, Brown played for Dan Reeves, who made it to multiple Super Bowls, and Dick Vermeil and Bill Parcells, each of whom won Super Bowls.

"I've taken bits and pieces from all of those guys, but I'm still me," said Brown, who also credits his father, Jerry, a military man, and his mother, Ann, who offered a "stern hand" during Brown's growing-up years, for having positively impacted his life. "I am who I am. But I've definitely learned a lot from a lot of people along the way. I feel very blessed."

While the former All-SEC performer is quite content with where he is in his coaching career, he admits that an opportunity someday to coach at his alma mater would be something special.

"If the situation was right and the opportunity presented itself and it was good for my family, I would love to go home to The University of Alabama and try to instill in others what was instilled in me," he said.

Regarding family, Brown and wife, Michelle, have three children–Loryn, 16; Collin, 6; and Anna Katherine, 3. And when he's not coaching or involved in a family activity, Brown can likely be found outdoors enjoying his favorite pastime–duck hunting.

"The ducks are just beautiful, and watching dogs go retrieve is something else," Brown said.

Watching and following Alabama football, not surprisingly, is also high on Brown's priority list.

"I like what I see at Alabama right now," Brown said. "One thing I'm seeing that I hadn't seen in a few years is intensity and passion, particularly on the defensive side of the ball. We're also getting more talent now, and the fact is, talent can make or break a coach, and in recent years, I don't think Coach (Mike) Shula has had just a whole lot of talent. I'm also glad to see the much-needed improvements with the facilities. Bryant Hall is just tremendous, and the weight room is really something. If I was there now, they'd have a hard time getting me out of the weight room. It just makes you want to work out."

The fact that Brown is a former Crimson Tide player may still be somewhat surprising to some. Brown's uncle, Wayne Burns, played at Auburn from 1964 to 1967, and Shannon's older brother, Steve, suited up for the Tigers from 1986 to 1989. Brown, however, had his reasons for not wanting to follow in his family members' footsteps.

"The Eric Ramsey situation was going on around that time at Auburn," Brown said, "and my brother gave me some important advice, telling me, 'This thing is going to get ugly.' That had a lot to do with my decision. The second thing was that I wanted to make a name for myself. I didn't want to be known at Auburn as Steve's little brother or Wayne's nephew."

After redshirting his freshman season in

1991, Brown began his playing career in 1992 as a back-up to starting nose tackle James Gregory. Brown saw action in nine games that year as the Tide went 13-0 and won the national championship. After a period of time in which Brown didn't wear his national championship ring, he now wears it every day.

"One of my friends, James Mullinex, was a kicker at Appalachian State in college," Brown said. "He never won a national championship. He noticed one day that I wasn't wearing my ring and asked me why. I told him I just wasn't a jewelry guy. He said, 'Man, if I had a national championship ring, I'd wear it every day of my life.' I started wearing it after that. I know I didn't have the type of impact guys like Eric Curry and John Copeland had that season, but I did my part."

Alabama coaches moved Brown to the offensive line in 1993, but he returned to the defensive line the second week of the season after the defensive front was hit hard by injuries. Then it was Brown's turn to go down. He underwent arthroscopic knee surgery midway through the season but came back for the Tide's final three games. Alabama finished 9-3-1 that year.

The injury bug bit Brown again in 1994. This time it was a shoulder separation, suffered during the Tide's dramatic 29-28 win over Georgia.

"That was the longest night of my life," Brown said of the injury. "I felt like I was paralyzed when it first happened. I remember one of my teammates, Kelvin Moore, coming over and looking down at me and saying, 'Man, that doesn't look good.' I was like, 'Thanks, Kelvin.' Dr. (Les) Fowler was able to set my shoulder back in place there on the field."

Brown sat out the following week against Southern Miss and then, equipped with a shoulder harness, got in for 30 snaps against Tennessee the week after that. The next Saturday, against Ole Miss, in a contest remembered mostly for a mid-game lighting storm delay, the still less-than-100 per cent Brown turned in one of the best outings of his career, logging nine tackles, three stops behind the line and one sack.

"That lightning storm saved us that game," Brown said. "I guess God wanted us to win because we really had not been playing well up to that point. I remember us having a 'Come to Jesus' meeting in the locker room while we waited to resume play in the second quarter."

Brown finished the 1994 season with 12 quarterback pressures, 46 tackles, five stops behind the line and five sacks en route to earning second-team all-conference accolades. Brown's play and leadership were instrumental in helping the Tide to a highly successful 12-1 season that culminated with a 24-17 win over Ohio State in the Florida Citrus Bowl.

"Shannon was a tenacious player who played hard, and it was a pleasure to play alongside him," Parker said. "The way he played through pain says a lot about his toughness. He was the epitome of a true college football player. He worked hard in the off-season and in practice, and it paid off for him."

Although his numbers dropped a bit his senior season–due in large part to the double-teams he was facing–he was still good enough to earn first-team All-SEC honors. Alabama went 8-3 in 1995 but missed out on a bowl game because of NCAA sanctions.

Photo: University of Alabama

"That was one of the biggest disappointments, not getting to play in a bowl game my senior year," Brown said. "It's always been hard for me to understand why players who did nothing wrong are punished because of something someone does wrong years earlier."

Brown's strong showing during Senior Bowl week, coupled with his outstanding career at Alabama, impressed NFL scouts. He was the first Alabama player selected in the 1996 NFL Draft, going in the third round (84th overall) to the Atlanta Falcons.

But Brown's professional career got off to a rocky start almost immediately when he blew out his knee on the second day of training camp. The Falcons cut him before the season started.

The St. Louis Rams picked him up in 1997, but Brown, still hampered by injuries, was released midway through the season. Finally 100 percent healthy in 1998, Brown joined Parcells and the Jets, but when the Jets expressed their intention of sending him overseas to play in the World League, Brown opted to retire from the NFL.

"At that point in my life, being married and all, I was just ready to put down some roots," he explained. "The NFL just wasn't meant to be for me. But I have absolutely no regrets. I was meant to be a football coach."

Brown began his coaching career at Southern Academy in Greensboro in 1998. He was a volunteer assistant that first year and then served as head coach from 1999 to 2001. After that came a two-year head coaching stint at Greensboro High School before his move to Bob Jones in 2004.

In his seven years as a head coach, Brown's teams have turned in five winning seasons, including 11-1 and 10-2 ledgers while at Southern Academy. It should be noted, too, that Greensboro was coming off an 0-10 season when Brown took over in 2002. He promptly led them to the state playoffs and a final 6-5 record.

"He's obviously a good coach and that says a lot about his character and leadership," Parker said. "You can go back to when he was a team captain at Alabama, and I think that's just carried over to what he's doing today."

And Brown couldn't be more content and satisfied with what he's doing today.

"I've truly been blessed to be able to work with young athletes and try and mold them into young men," he said. "I'm extremely thankful for all the opportunities I've been given. I think about that Bible verse that says, 'To whom much is given, much is expected.' I've been given an awful lot."

He's also, in return, given back an awful lot. Bama fans who were around during Brown's time at the Capstone would attest to that.

"When we signed autographs in the spring, Coach Stallings required that we only had to do so many, but all five years I was there, I never left until everyone who wanted my autograph got my autograph," Brown said. "I knew how hot it was out there, and I felt it was my obligation to give them what they wanted. I really felt like I had a good connection with the fans, and I know I'm biased but I really believe Bama fans are the best in the world."

So how does he want to be remembered by the Bama nation?

"I would like for them to remember that I gave everything I had and that I was loyal to the program and to what Alabama stood for," Brown said.

Wish granted. ■

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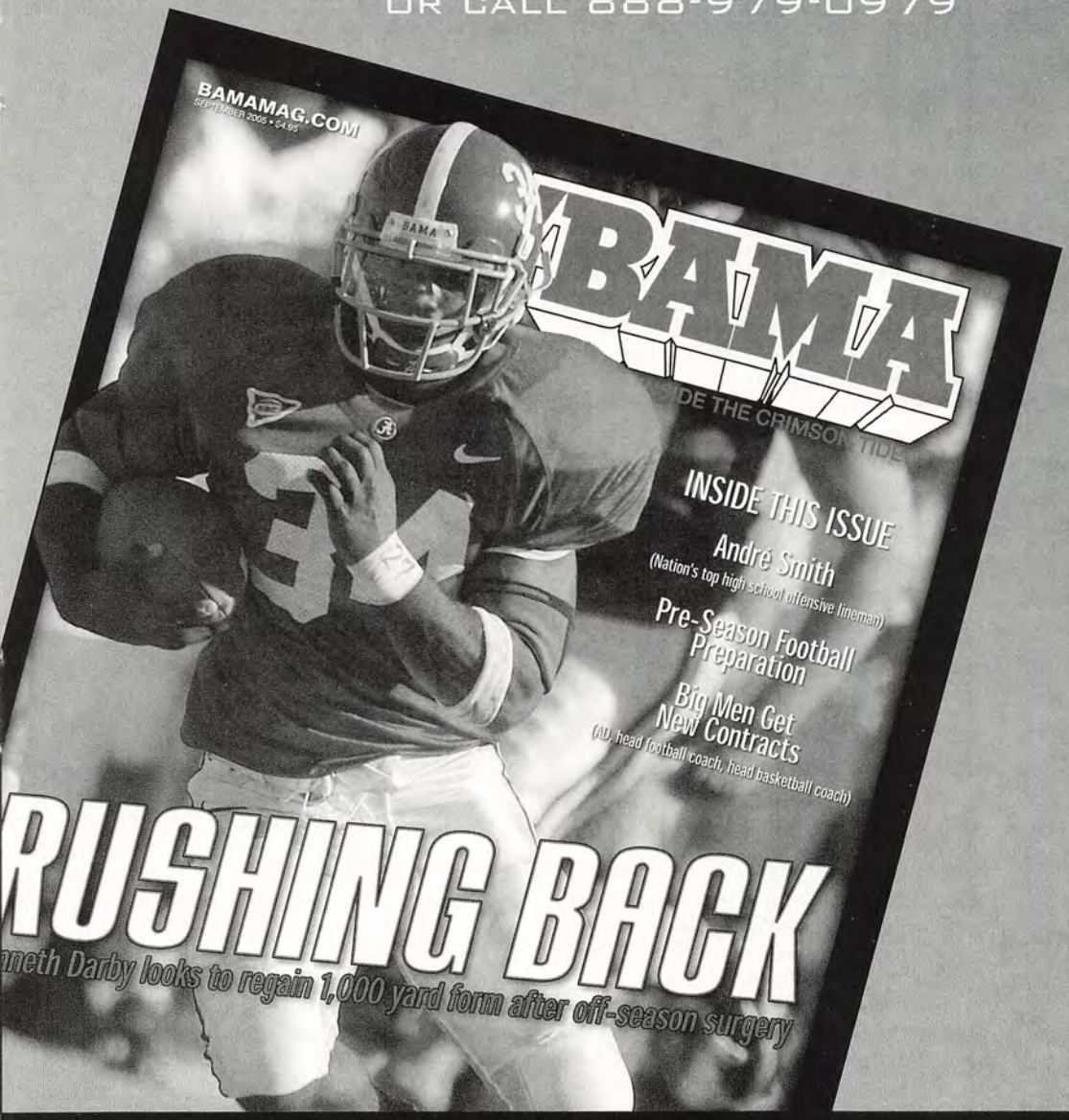
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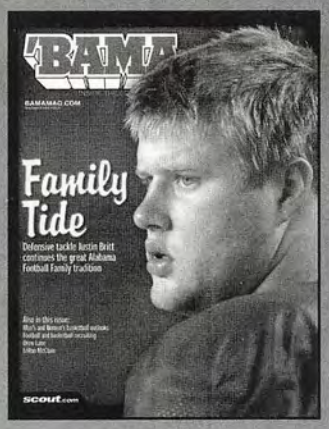

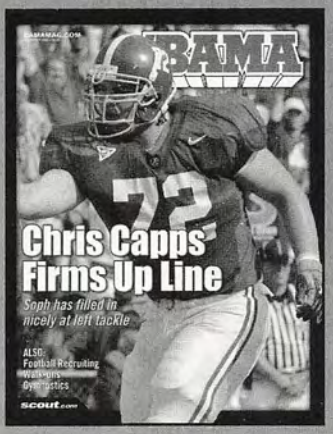

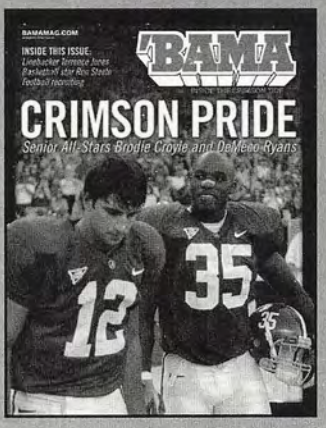

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'BAMA Scorecard

Notebooking Crimson Tide Sports

Hoops And Helmets

Richard Cirminiello of CollegeFootballNews.com put together an interesting list as the NCAA Basketball Tournament got underway. It is his belief that college football fans also get excited about their basketball teams when those teams make it into the NCAA Tournament. And a school that has mostly a basketball following takes pride when the football team has success.

And so he compiled a list of the Dandy Dozen major colleges who can be proud of both their football and basketball teams. As he pointed out, fans of schools like Texas A&M and Tennessee (naming two or your likely unfavorites) are stunned that their football teams are dragging down their basketball programs in this combo rating. Some teams (Penn State, Virginia Tech, Georgia) have good football, but have to wait until fall to cheer again. On the other hand, Duke has a football team, but...

Alabama, of course, made the top 12. Cirminiello wrote: Alabama – It was a close call, but 'Bama squeezed into one of the final at-large NCAA Tournament bids, bursting the Hoops and Helmets bubble for Memphis. The Tide was just 17-12 on the year, but to their credit, they pulled together nicely after leading scorer Chuck Davis was lost for the year at the midway point of the season. For the first time in a few years, it was the Alabama football team which did most of the heavy lifting this winter. The Tide, fueled by the nation's most miserly defense, jumped out to a 9-0 start before coming back to planet Earth, and settling for a suffocating Cotton Bowl win over Texas Tech. Winter MVP – LB DeMeco Ryans.

(He also picked an MVP or two for each team in his top 12.)

His top 12 were:

1. Texas, 2. Ohio State, 3. LSU, 4. UCLA, 5. West Virginia, 6. Boston College, 7. Florida, 8. Wisconsin, 9. Nevada, 10. Oklahoma, 11. Iowa, 12. Alabama.

He ranked all 119 major college football teams (all play basketball and football). Rankings of other SEC teams were:

25. Tennessee, 30. South Carolina, 31. Georgia, 32. Auburn, 54. Kentucky, 57. Arkansas, 60. Vanderbilt, 82. Mississippi State, and 94. Ole Miss.

Sign Up

When Alabama hosts Hawaii on September 2 to open the 2006 football season, Crimson Tide fans will be entertained by several new scoreboards and digital advertising displays that will be the largest ever installed at an outdoor collegiate stadium.

A pair of new video displays, featuring Daktronics VideoPlus display technology, will be added in the northeast and northwest corners. The video screens will measure approximately 20 feet high and 34.5 feet wide.

Alabama fans will also notice displays that will run the length of Bryant-Denny Stadium on both the east and west sides measuring 420 feet long and four feet high, the largest ever installed in a college setting.

"We are excited about the possibilities that the new scoreboards and displays will bring to an already great setting," said Alabama's Director of Athletics Mal Moore. "These new screens and display boards will enhance the ability of our fans to enjoy the game."

The four displays will combine to have more than 2.3 million individual red, green and blue light emitting diodes (LEDs) that present live and recorded video images, colorful animation and vivid graphics with incredible brightness and wide-angle visibility. In game progress information, team and player stats, full-color animation and cropped video clips can also be shown to add entertainment and raise fan enthusiasm during games.

"All of us at Daktronics are extremely excited about this project and we look forward to continuing a long and successful relationship with the storied tradition that is Alabama football," said Glen Marts, Daktronics Regional salesman. "This installation will set a new standard for collegiate facilities, while providing Crimson Tide fans with the added advantage of entertainment and game information at an exceptional level."

The new displays are part of a $50 million stadium renovation to the north end zone at Bryant-Denny Stadium that began following the 2004 season and is scheduled for completion by July, 2006.

National Honor

Tide senior pitcher Stephanie VanBrakle was named the USA Softball National Player for the week ending March 12.

VanBrakle went 4-0 on the week defeating Florida and South Carolina twice. She didn't allow a run in 25.0 innings posting a 0.00 ERA. She threw a no-hitter against South Carolina and allowed only four hits in 25.0 innings pitched, translating into a .049 opponent batting average. She struck out 39 batters including 15 against Florida. She also hit .412 (7-17) with a home run and four RBI in the two series for a five-game hitting streak.

"I thought I pitched really well," said VanBrakle. "We faced two really good teams and to pitch as well as I did was a great accomplishment. The whole team played extremely well and I felt confident because of it. My teammates made it possible for me to be so relaxed because when your offense scores that many runs, it really makes it easy."

"Steph threw four of the most dominating games I've ever seen her pitch," Head Coach Patrick Murphy said. "It was certainly the best four game stretch she's pitched since she's been here and we're all extremely proud of her."

The honor marks the second time in her career that VanBrakle has received the award. She was named the National Player of the Week last season following her performance in the SEC Tournament.

New Assistant

Alabama Soccer Coach Don Staley has announced the hiring of Jeremy Hampton as the Crimson Tide's new assistant coach. Hampton's main responsibility will lie in coaching Alabama's goalkeepers as well as assisting in recruiting.

"I've known Jeremy for several years," Staley said, "and I've gotten to see him in action. I was impressed with what I saw this summer when he worked our camps. I felt like Jeremy could come in immediately and help our goalkeepers. He has shown to be a hard worker with a great work ethic and I'm excited to have him join our program."

Hampton is a 2002 graduate from The University of Alabama. While at The Capstone he was a member of the Crimson Tide's Club Soccer team where he played goalkeeper and sweeper.

"As an alumnus of The University, it's always been a dream of mine to coach at Alabama alongside Coach Don Staley," Hampton said. "Every year that I've been involved in coaching I have tried to field the most competitive team possible and prepare them for anything that may come their way. I believe that I'll be able to help accomplish this same thing at the Division I level."

Hampton left from Hillcrest High School, where he was the head men's soccer coach, and joined the Tide as the team began spring practice. Prior to his stop at Hillcrest he served as head coach at Hattiesburg (Mississippi) High School, where he started the soccer program. Hampton also served a stint as an assistant coach at Central High School in Tuscaloosa.

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Over the past two summers Hampton has been directly involved with The University of Alabama's Goalkeeper Academy. It was there that Staley became familiar with Hampton's coaching style and ability. He has also worked soccer camps at Southern Miss and Louisiana Tech.

Women's Honor

Navonda Moore, a junior guard on the Alabama women's basketball team, was named second-team All-SEC for her efforts during the 2005-06 season.

"It gives me great pleasure that the coaches around the SEC found a way to honor a player who I feel is very deserving of this award," Alabama Head Coach Stephany Smith said. "I think she made great strides as a person and as a player and I am very proud of what she has done this season."

Moore, a native of Jackson, Mississippi, was the team's leading scorer during the regular season, pouring in 12.7 points per game. She averaged 14.9 points per game in the SEC schedule, ranking her seventh in the league in scoring during league play only.

She was red-hot down the stretch for the Tide, averaging 19.2 points per game in her last nine contests. That span included a 31-point outing against fifth-ranked Tennessee on Feb. 19, the first time in nearly two years that a Tide player scored more than 30 points in a game.

Moore also led the team in steals with 46 and pulled down 4.7 rebounds per game during the regular season.

It was the third-straight season that an Alabama player earned the honor after Monique Bivins was named to the second team the past two seasons.

Fine Finish

The Alabama Gymnastics team scored a 196.400 to beat Auburn in Tuscaloosa on Senior Night March 17. It was Bama's 88th consecutive gymnastics victory over Auburn.

Seniors Mari Bayer, Rachael Delahoussaye, Dana Filetti, Ashley Miles and Dana Pierce all enjoyed their last home meet in Coleman Coliseum, going out with a 21-3 career home record.

Miles won the all-around title, the first time this season she competed all-around. She defeated two former Olympic performers and the nation's sixth-ranked all-arounder.

The 10,008 fans for the meet was part of Alabama's season average of 12,654 per meet, the second best in collegiate gymnastics history and the best average in the nation since 1993. The Tide's total shatters the school and Southeastern Conference record, bettering the old mark of 10,570 set last season.

Track Success

Alabama senior hurdler Beau Walker earned indoor All-America honors for the second straight year, finishing fourth in the 60-meter hurdles for the second year in a row at the NCAA Indoor Championships in Fayetteville. The Tide star broke her own school record in the hurdles with an 8.01 in the finals.

"It's not easy earning All-America," Walker said. "I'll take it when I can get it. Growing up my mom always told me to leave my mark so that's what I was trying to do."

The Aurora, Colorado native advanced the finals by finishing third in her heat with a time of 8.15, the seventh fastest time of the preliminaries to advance to the finals. She also battled a hamstring injury all week to turn in her performance.

"It says a lot about her to overcome her injury," Alabama Head Coach Sandy Fowler said. "I think in her heat race she realized that she could run with her injury and that she was tough enough to run. I'm proud of her. She's tough and she did really well."

The Tide's other star sprinter, Tahesia Harrigan, suffered from the effects of injury as well. She ran 7.24 to take third in her heat of the 60-meter dash but missed qualifying for the finals by one hundredth of a second.

"I felt that she did the best that she could," Fowler said. "She ran hard and out to a fast start. She just couldn't turn over. It was hard for her

because she is battling both a quad and a groin and I'm a firm believer that you have to have all the pieces together to run your best race."

Fowler was pleased with the Tide's two newcomers to the NCAA Championships. Freshman Chealsea Taylor ran 23.88 in her first NCAA event, the 200-meter dash, 14th best in the preliminaries and Kou Luogon finished 12th in the preliminaries of the 400-meter. Lougon was third in her heat with a time of 53.63.

"For Chealsea to run her third best time of the season at nationals with the caliber of competition she faced says a lot about her," Fowler said. "She is just going to get better and better. This was also a learning experience for Kou. She'll learn about being able to using the bank at banked tracks to her advantage."

The Alabama men's track and field team fought hard but came up just short at the NCAA Indoor Championships in Fayetteville. The Tide had a pair of ninth place finishes and a tenth place finish and one Alabama runner was well on his way to an All-America finish in the distance medley relay before suffering a fall.

The highlight of the day for Alabama was LaChristopher Lewis earning All-America in the 400-meter dash with a tenth place finish and a personal best 46.71.

SEC Indoor 800-meter champion Peter Etoot finished third in his heat with a time of 1:50.47, but failed to advance to the finals after getting boxed in down the front stretch and having another competitor fall in front of him.

Chauncey Harris had a busy day for Alabama competing in both the 60m and the 200m. Harris posted a 6.70 in the 60-meter dash for a ninth place finish, just .01 short of qualifying for the finals. Harris also finished third in his heat in the 200m with a time of 21.31.

In the distance medley relay, the Tide was moving up, charging from seventh but Lewis suffered a fall in the turn after getting clipped by another competitor.

"We are inches away from having a great meet," Glance said. "The guys fought hard and you can't fault their effort. Everyone gave it everything they had. When you get to the championships, though, you just can't make mistakes. But the guys came to fight and they did a good job of representing themselves."

Turning 100

When the Alabama women's tennis team defeated Boston University earlier this year, for the Crimson Tide's fourth consecutive victory, it gave Head Coach Jenny Mainz her 100th career win in front of family and friends on the team's Parents' Weekend.

The Tide played well on every court and lost just one match all day to give Mainz her 100th win in convincing fashion. Ashley Bentley's win at number two singles clinched it for Alabama.

"It was a great day," Mainz said. "We played well and beat a good team. We're taking the necessary steps to get better. You always have to be ready to play and we took care of things today. We didn't let up at all and didn't have any lapses."

"This senior class has done a lot of winning and that's why we reached this accomplishment today," Mainz said. "They are the ones to be commended."

Basketball Commitment

Alabama Basketball Coach Mark Gottfried went into the spring signing period, which was to begin April 12, knowing he could sign at least three (four if Jermareo Davidson elects to turn professional) new players. He may not get that many because there aren't a lot of good prospects left for the late signing period.

But there was at least one good one out there, and Gottfried got him.

Demetrius Jemison was one of the best remaining forwards on the board, and the Birmingham Huffman standout selected Alabama. The 6-6 Jemison is a combo forward, capable of playing a post or wing spot.

"I talked to Coach Gottfried today and I told him I wanted to be a part of the team," Jemison said in announcing his commitment "I want to be a part of the program."

Jemison was one of the highest-rated forwards available on a national basis. A guy who plays with a lot of energy and savvy, Jemison expects to have a chance to man both forward slots at some juncture during his time in Tuscaloosa.

"I'll be playing some 3 and 4," Jemison said. "I'll be able to cause some match up problems. I can do some things on the wing and post up while doing some perimeter type things."

Jemison indicated that the Alabama staff told him he'd have ample chances to come in and earn playing time through working hard. In the end, the decision was a family one for the forward.

He said, "I chose Alabama because it was closer to home and my mom and family can come see me; it's a 45 minute drive from Birmingham. You can't beat Alabama and me being a hometown kid, we've got the opportunity to do something special in the state this upcoming year."

He selected Bama over Baylor.

New Year's Day?

It's no surprise that Alabama Basketball Coach Mark Gottfried will have another tough schedule for his Crimson Tide next season. Gottfried annually plays one of the most difficult schedules.

But it may be something of a surprise that the biggest non-conference home game for Bama and its fans will be played on a day that may not be attractive for heading to Coleman Coliseum. Alabama has scheduled Oklahoma for a Tuscaloosa game on January 1–the traditional big bowl day for college football.

Gottfried is among those who believe that Alabama has been helped at NCAA Tournament time as the Selection Committee–which once made the Crimson Tide an example of not having a good enough non-conference schedule by leaving a worthy Bama squad out of the tournament–has taken Alabama's schedule into account.

Published reports have Alabama's 2006-07 schedule including participation in the Paradise Jam in November in the Virgin Islands. Other participants are Villanova, Iowa, Xavier, Toledo, Virginia Commonwealth, College of Charleston and Middle Tennessee.

The schedule also includes road trips to Notre Dame and North Carolina State. ■

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Alabama Football Schedules

The NCAA ruled that beginning this season, 2006, Division 1A college footballl teams may schedule a 12th regular season game. That sent schools scrambling to find opponents. Alabama has added Duke in Tuscaloosa as its 12th opponent this season. There will be a return game but not until September 18, 2010 and not necessarily at Durham, where Duke has a very small stadium.

This year and possibly in 2007, Alabama will play for 12 consecutive weeks. (It is believed Southeastern Conference athletics directors have given their permission for Alabama and Auburn to move their game back a week next season, which allows some flexibility in scheduling.)

Alabama does not have all its 2007 games announced. While open dates are currently listed as September 1 (the season-opener) and October 27, with Alabama and Auburn not playing on November 18 (playing November 25, the week before the SEC Championship Game, instead), the 2007 schedule could have some changes.

And while our schedule has Arkansas as the October 6, 2007, opponent, that date is also shown on Houston's future schedule as the Cougars being at Alabama.

Alabama Athletics Director Mal Moore and Florida State Athletics Director Dave Hart (a former Alabama basketball player) arranged for a game on September 29, 2007, at Jacksonville, Florida, in Alltel Stadium. This is a one-game only deal.

In upcoming years, Alabama has scheduled home-and-home games with Penn State in 2010 and 2011 (at Alabama September 11, 2010, and at State College on September 20, 2011); and Georgia Tech in 2012 and 2014 (September 15, 2012, in Tuscaloosa, and September 13, 2014, in Atlanta). Bama is also working on schedules with the likes of Oklahoma, Nebraska and Notre Dame.

2006 Alabama Football Schedule

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE
September 2	Hawaii	Tuscaloosa
September 9	Vanderbilt	Tuscaloosa
September 16	Louisiana-Monroe	Tuscaloosa
September 23	Arkansas	Fayetteville
September 30	Florida	Gainesville
October 7	Duke	Tuscaloosa
October 14	Mississippi	Tuscaloosa
October 21	Tennessee	Knoxville
October 28	Florida-International	Tuscaloosa
November 4	Mississippi State	Tuscaloosa
November 11	LSU	Baton Rouge
November 18	Auburn	Tuscaloosa

2007 Alabama Football Schedule

(All 12 games not yet determined and this schedule is subject to change)

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE
September 1	TBA	Tuscaloosa
September 8	Vanderbilt	Nashville
September 15	Louisiana-Monroe	Tuscaloosa
September 22	Georgia	Tuscaloosa
September 29	Florida State	Jacksonville
October 6	*Arkansas	Tuscaloosa
October 13	Mississippi	Oxford
October 20	Tennessee	Tuscaloosa
October 27	TBA	Tuscaloosa
November 3	LSU	Tuscaloosa
November 10	Mississippi State	Baton Rouge
November 25	Auburn	Auburn
December 1	Southeastern Conference Championship Game	Atlanta

*Houston shows this as a Houston @ Alabama game

Southeastern Conference 5-1-2 Schedule Format

Southeastern Conference football teams play a 5-1-2 format, meaning that each team plays the other five teams in its division, one permanent opponent from the other division, and two games against inter-division opponents on a rotating basis. For instance, Alabama has one game against each of the other five Western Division opponents (Arkansas, Auburn, LSU, Mississippi, and Mississippi State). The Crimson Tide's permanent opponent from the Eastern Division is Tennessee. This year Alabama also will play Eastern Division teams Florida and Vanderbilt. The rotating opponents are played in two-game series, one home and one away. Last year Alabama played Florida in Tuscaloosa and this year will meet the Gators in Gainesville. Alabama will host Vanderbilt this year, go to Nashville next year. And in 2007, Florida will rotate off the schedule and Georgia will rotate on for two years. This rotation assures that each SEC team will play every conference member no fewer than four times in a 10-year period and that each team will make at least two visits to every SEC stadium during that 10-year period.

The schedule for non-division rotating opponents for Alabama:

2006 and 2011–at Florida, Vanderbilt
2007 and 2012–at Vanderbilt, Georgia
2008 and 2013–at Georgia, Kentucky
2009 and 2014–at Kentucky, South Carolina
2010 and 2015–at South Carolina, Florida

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2006 Alabama Spring Sports Schedules

BASEBALL

Date	Opponent	CT Time
Feb. 10	Winthrop	6:30
Feb. 11	Winthrop	4:00
Feb. 12	Winthrop	2:00
Feb. 14	Samford	6:30
Feb. 17	Kent State	6:30
Feb. 18	Kent State	4:00
Feb. 19	Kent State	2:00
Feb. 21	Memphis	6:30
Feb. 24	Florida International	6:30
Feb. 25	Florida International	4:00
Feb. 26	Florida International	2:00
March 1	Birmingham-Southern	6:30
March 3	Appalachian State	6:30
March 4	Appalachian State	4:00
March 5	Appalachian State	2:00
March 8	@ South Alabama	TBA
March 10	@ Nebraska	2:05
March 11	@ Nebraska	1:05
March 12	@ Nebraska	1:05
March 15	Southern Miss	6:30
March 17	@ Georgia	6:00
March 18	@ Georgia	3:00
March 19	@ Georgia	12:00
March 22	Troy	6:30
March 24	Ole Miss	6:30
March 25	Ole Miss	4:00
March 26	Ole Miss	2:00
March 29	Lipscomb	6:30
March 31	Mississippi State	6:30
April 1	Mississippi State (FSNS)	3:00
April 1	Mississippi State	2:00
April 5	Alabama-Birmingham	6:30
April 7	@ South Carolina	6:00
April 8	@ South Carolina	3:00
April 9	@ South Carolina	12:30
April 12	@ Southeastern Louisiana	TBA
April 14	@ LSU	6:30
April 15	@ LSU	2:00
April 16	@ LSU	1:00
April 19	Mississippi Valley State	6:30
April 21	Vanderbilt	6:30
April 22	Vanderbilt	4:00
April 23	Vanderbilt	2:00
April 26	@ Alabama-Birmingham	6:30
April 28	Auburn	6:30
April 29	Auburn	4:00
April 30	Auburn	2:00
May 5	@ Arkansas	TBA
May 6	@ Arkansas	TBA
May 7	@ Arkansas	TBA
May 12	Florida	6:30
May 13	Florida	4:00
May 14	Florida	2:00
May 18	@ Tennessee	TBA
May 19	@ Tennessee	TBA
May 20	@ Tennessee	TBA

SOFTBALL

Date	Opponent	CT Time
Feb. 10-12	Bama Bash	TBA
Feb. 17-19	Florida Atlantic Tournament @ Boca Raton, Fla.	TBA
Feb. 22	@ Southern Miss	6:00
Feb. 24-26	The Leadoff Classic @ Columbus, Ga.	TBA
March 1	Louisiana Tech (2)	5:00
March 3-5	Crimson Classic	TBA
March 7	Florida (2)	5:00
March 8	Florida	2:00
March 11	South Carolina (2)	1:00
March 12	South Carolina	1:30
March 16-19	Kia Classic @ Fullerton, Calif.	TBA
March 23	Birmingham-Southern	7:00
March 25	Tennessee (2)	1:00
March 26	Tennessee	1:30
April 1	@ Kentucky (2)	1:00
April 2	@ Kentucky	1:00
April 5	Samford	6:30
April 8	@ Ole Miss (2)	1:00
April 9	@ Ole Miss	1:00
April 11	Troy	6:30
April 14	LSU (2)	5:00
April 15	LSU	2:00
April 19	@ Birmingham-Southern	7:00
April 22	Georgia (2)	1:00
April 23	Georgia	1:30
April 25	@ Auburn (2)	5:00
April 26	@ Auburn	4:00
April 29	@ Mississippi State (2)	1:00
April 30	@ Mississippi State	1:00
May 3	Southern Miss	6:30
May 5	@ Arkansas (2)	5:00
May 6	@ Arkansas	1:00
May 11-14	SEC Tournament @ Athens	

MEN'S TENNIS

Date	Opponent	CT Time
Jan. 20-23	SEC Indoors @ New Orleans	
Jan. 29	Furman	10:00
Jan. 29	Troy	3:00
Feb. 10	Oklahoma	5:00
Feb. 12	Michigan	Noon
Feb. 18	@ Georgia Tech	1:00
Feb. 25	@ FSU	1:00
March 3	Vanderbilt	3:00
March 5	Kentucky	1:00
March 10	@ Ole Miss	2:00
March 12	@ Mississippi State	1:00
March 16-19	Blue-Gray @ Montgomery	
March 22	Southern Miss	Noon
March 22	Birmingham-Southern	5:00
March 24	Tennessee	4:00
March 26	@ Georgia	1:00
March 31	@ Florida	3:00
April 2	@ South Carolina	1:00
April 7	LSU	5:00
April 9	Arkansas	1:00
April 12	@ Samford	Noon
April 12	@ Alabama-Birmingham	5:00
April 15	Auburn	5:00
April 20-23	SEC Tournament	

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Date	Opponent	CT Time
Jan. 14-16	Virginia Invitational	TBA
Jan. 27	@ Denver	6:00
Jan. 29	@ Colorado	10:00
Feb. 2-5	ITA National Team @ Wisconsin	
Feb. 11	@ Northwestern	10:00
Feb. 12	@ Furman	10:00
Feb. 18	Georgia Tech	1:00
Feb. 19	Texas Tech	11:00
March 3	@ Vanderbilt	2:30
March 5	@ Kentucky	Noon
March 10	Mississippi	4:00
March 12	Mississippi State	1:00
March 18	Boston University	Noon
March 19	Michigan	11:00
March 24	@ Tennessee	5:00
March 26	Georgia	1:00
March 31	Florida	4:00
April 2	South Carolina	1:00
April 7	@ LSU	4:00
April 9	@ Arkansas	1:00
April 12	@ South Alabama	1:30
April 15	@ Auburn	6:00
April 20-23	SEC Championships @ Gainesville	

MEN'S GOLF

Date	Competition
Feb. 5-7	Mercedes-Benz @ Jacksonville, Fla.
Feb. 26-28	Puerto Rico Classic @ Rio Mar Bch
March 18-19	EZ-GO Schenkel @ Statesboro, Ga.
March 26-28	Hootie at Bulls Bay @ Charleston, S.C.
April 10-11	Georgia Tech Collegiate
April 21-23	SEC Championships @ Sea Island, Ga.

WOMEN'S GOLF

Date	Competition
Feb. 19-21	Papa John's @ Miami
March 3-5	LSU-Cleveland Classic
March 11-12	Lady Gator @ Gainesville
March 17-19	Longhorns Invitational @ Austin
April 14-16	SEC Championships @ Nashville

MEN'S TRACK & FIELD

Date	Competition
March 16-19	Alabama Relays
March 25	USA Training Site
April 1	LSU/Stanford @ Baton Rouge
April 8	Ole Miss Open
April 15	UTEP Mount Sac
April 27-29	Drake Relays
May 6	Jesse Owens Classic
May 10-14	SEC Championships @ Fayetteville

WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD

Date	Competition
March 16-19	Alabama Relays
April 1	South Florida Invitational
April 6-8	Texas Relays
April 8	Ole Miss Open
April 15	UTEP Invitational
April 21-22	Commodore Invitational
April 27-29	Drake Relays
May 10-14	SEC Championships @ Fayetteville

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